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THE

WORKS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON,

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

IN THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

FOURTH EDITION,

INCLUDING HIS COLLECTED LETTERS.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
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THE

WORKS

OF THE

LONG MOURNFUL AND SORELY DISTRESSED

ISAAC PENINGTON;

WHOM THE LORD,
IN HIS TENDER MERCY, AT LENGTH VISITED AND RELIEVED
BY THE MINISTRY OF THAT DESPISED PEOPLE

CALLED QUAKERS.

AND
IN THE SPRINGINGS OF THAT LIGHT, LIFE,
AND HOLY POWER IN HIM, WHICH THEY HAD TRULY AND
FAITHFULLY TESTIFIED OF, AND DIRECTED HIS MIND
TO, WERE THESE THINGS WRITTEN;

AND ARE NOW
PUBLISHED AS A THANKFUL TESTIMONY OF THE GOODNESS OF
THE LORD UNTO HIM, AND FOR THE
BENEFIT OF OTHERS.

"They also that erred in spirit shall know understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." Isaiah xxix. 24.

FOURTH EDITION,
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

[redacted]

CONTENTS.

		Page.
Testimony of George Fox	Concerning Isaac Penington	1
" " William Penn	" " "	8
" " George Whitehead	" " "	10
" " Samuel Jennings	" " "	13
" " Thomas Zachary	" " "	17
" " Ambrose Rigge	" " "	18
" " Robert Jones	" " "	20
" " Thomas Evernden	" " "	22
" " Christopher Taylor	" " "	24
" " Mary Penington	" " "	26
" " Thomas Ellwood	" " "	29
" " Alexander Parker	" " "	41
" " John Penington	" " "	44
The Way of Life and Death made manifest, and set before men		47
Some Positions cencerning the Apostasy from the Christian spirit		51
Some Principles guiding out of the Apostasy, to the Christian spirit		99
A Testimony of great concernment to all called Christians		132
A brief Account of what we are, and what our work is in the world		134
An Addition concerning the doctrine of Justification		138
The scattered Sheep sought after - - - -		145
A Lamentation; with a call to mourning and lamentation, &c.		149
Some Propositions concerning the only way of Salvation		157
The fundamental Principle of the Gospel - - -		163
A short Catechism for the sake of the Simple-hearted		167
Babylon the Great described - - - - -		183
The Sins of Babylon - - - - -		200
The judgment of Babylon - - - - -		222
Some plain Queries drawn out of the Book of the Revelations, &c.		237
Some Considerations, helping out of the Suburbs of Babylon, &c.		240
An Exhortation to the Present Powers - - -		243
The Jew outward: being a Glass for the Professors of this Age		253
The Axe laid to the Root of the old corrupt Tree - -		289
Some Assertions concerning Faith, its Nature, Rise, &c.		305
A necessary Warning, of great importance to all called Christians		315
A brief History of the state of the Church since the Apostle's days		329
An Exhortation to the present Age, relating to the workings of the mystery of Iniquity, and the mystery of Godliness		337

CONTENTS.

	Page
A brief account of Some Reasons why the Quakers cannot do some things, and forbear doing some things; for which they suffer, &c.	346
Some Considerations proposed to the City of London, &c.	350
Some Considerations proposed to the distracted Nation of England	353
To the Army	358
A Question proposed to the Rules, Teachers, and People of England	359
An Examination of the Grounds or Causes which are said to induce the Court of Boston, to make that Law of Banishment &c.	369
Examination of the Appendix of John Norton's Book	427
Answer to another Paper called "A True Relation &c."	449
The Authority which Christ excluded out of his Church	454
Some Considerations concerning the state of Things, &c.	469
A Warning of Love from the Bowels of Life to Professors	481
Where is the Wise, where is the Scribe? &c.	491
LETTERS	
To a near Relative	503
,, a Parent	506
,, Bridget Atley	508
,, one who sent a Paper of Richard Baxter's	510
,, a Friend in London	511
,, Elizabeth Walmsley	512
,, my Friends at Horton and thereabouts	513
,, Friends of Truth in and about the two Chalfonts	516
,, Elizabeth Walmsley of Giles Chalfonts	517
,, the Earl of Bridgewater	518
,, ——— ———	521
,, ——— ———	523
,, Friends of Truth in and about the two Chalfonts	524
,, the Single, Upright-hearted and Faithful Friends of Truth in and about the two Chalfonts	527
,, Friends in Amersham	532
,, my dear Friends, Brethern, and Sisters in the Truth in and about the two Chalfonts	533
,, the Friends at Chalfont in Buckinghamsire	534
,, George Fox	535
,, Friends of both the Chalfonts	536
,, ——— ———	541
,, his Brother	543
,, ——— ———	548
,, Bridget Atley	549
,, Friends	551
,, ——— ———	552
,, ——— ———	554

The Testimony of GEORGE FOX, *concerning* ISAAC PENINGTON.

CONCERNING our dear brother Isaac Penington, who is lately deceased, and whom the Lord hath lately taken away from among his people, and from his wife and children; he was a serviceable minister of the gospel of salvation, and of the word of life, which did spring through him often, to the refreshing and comforting of the church of Christ, and to his own comfort, and to the praise and glory of the Lord God. Amen.

And now all must be content with and in the will of the Lord God, who giveth and taketh at his own pleasure; who hath all breath and life, and the length of days in his hand. And so he is well in the Lord; blessed be the name of the Lord, who is over all for ever. For, as John saith; "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: "yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors, "and their works do follow them."

You may see what a cloud of witnesses the Apostle speaketh of, which died in the faith, and obtained a good report; which holy and divine faith is the victory. In this faith they pleased God; and by this faith, the gift of God, they had access to God, and so died in the Lord, and have his blessing from him, the fountain then and now. And so all true Christians are to live, that Christ may be "magnified in their bodies, whether it be by life or death," as the same Apostle saith, Phil. i. 20. And the same Apostle saith to the saints; "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Rom. xiv. 7, 8. And Christ saith, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?" John xi. 26. For they are grafted into Christ by believing in his light, which is the life in him.

The memorial of the just is blessed: "Even the Lord God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial." Hos. xii. 5. "But the

name of the wicked shall rot." Prov. x. 7. "and his memory shall be cut off from the earth." Psal. cix. 15. So ye may see the memorial of the just is recorded by the just in Holy Scriptures of Truth. But my desire is, that all may see their names written in the Lamb's book of life, before the foundation of the world, and rejoice in that, "and praise God, that their life is hid with Christ in God." Col. iii. 3.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psal. cxvi. 15. Therefore live the holy and righteous life, that ye may die the death of the righteous.

It is now above twenty years since Isaac Penington came among God's people, and since that time he has gone through many exercises and trials and temptations and snares, both by them that are without, and false brethren; besides all his sufferings, and cruel and tedious imprisonments, and persecutions, for the name and life of Jesus Christ, and true Christianity; which in the end, some years before his death, the Lord, in and with his power, set him free from; and gave him dominion over all, and established him upon his living rock and foundation, to praise his holy name in his church, and among his saints and people, in the Lord's fresh living power and spirit. And he did freely minister of his living bread and water, which he had received from above, from the living God and his Son, to the comfort of them that fear the Lord, and keep their habitation in the truth, in meekness and in humility.

I do know that he is well in the Lord, and in peace with him through the Lord Jesus Christ. Such as are puffed up, and do swell in their notions, may rejoice and be glad that he is taken out of their way; and they may think they will have the more liberty; because that he, being a living stone, and member of the living head, had no fellowship nor unity with such as were full of high swelling words, without the life of Christ, the heavenly and spiritual man; but did reprove such, and admonish them: but such their gladness and joy will be turned into bitterness and sorrow and mourning in the end. Therefore, let all such take heed and be warned, lest the hand of the Lord do suddenly turn against

them. For I could desire, that all were in that innocent life that he departed out of this world in: and I know that he died in the Lord, and is blessed. So let his works follow him, who is well, and at his rest with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the rest of all his faithful people. To him be glory and honor, thanks and praise, now and forever. Amen.

The Testimony of WILLIAM PENN, *concerning* ISAAC PENINGTON.

As the memory of the just is blessed, so to me there seems a blessing upon those that have a right remembrance of them: wherefore, to the memory of this just man, my dear friend and relation, Isaac Penington, I do, with a sincere and religious affection, dedicate this ensuing testimony.

And first, give me leave to say something of his manly capacity: the best comes after.

He was well descended as to his worldly parentage, and born heir to a fair inheritance; his education was suitable to his quality among men, having all the advantages the schools and universities of his own country could give him, joined with the conversation of some of the knowingest and considerablest men of his own time. But his natural abilities, the gifts of his Creator, they excelled: he was a man quick in apprehension, fruitful in conception, and of a lively wit and intelligence, all adorned with an extraordinary mildness; that as other men are wont to show their pregnancy by sharpness, he manifested his with an engaging sweetness.

His father's station in public business gave him pretence enough to share of the world's greatness; but, which brings me to his better and religious capacity, he, with blessed meek Moses, refused the Egyptian glory of the world, and chose rather a life dedicated to an inquiry after God, and holy fellowship with him and his despised Israel.

Very early did the Lord visit him with a more than ordinary manifestation of his love; and it had that good effect

upon him, that it kept him both from the evils, and vain worships of the world; and he became the wonder of his kindred and familiars for his awful life, and serious and frequent retirements, declining all company that might interrupt his meditations; and by giving himself over to a life of mourning and pilgrimage, he was as unpleasant to them, as the world was to him. Nor did this sorrow flow from a sense of former vice; for he was virtuous from his childhood; but with holy Habakkuk, from the dread he had of the majesty of God, and his desire to find a resting-place in the great day of trouble. Nothing in these exercises gave him ease or comfort, but the smiles of God's countenance upon his soul; and that it was he thirsted after with a perpetual solicitation; first, "How shall I appear?" and then, "Oh that I may appear before God!"

His inward exercises and enjoyments being of a very peculiar nature, made him take but little comfort in any of the religious societies then known to him. He was as one alone; for he saw so much of that uncircumcised and uncrucified flesh (which is as grass) profess the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom; I mean people but under ordinary convictions, that had never known Jacob's troubles, nor the fear and trembling with which the true salvation is wrought; and that the spirit and abilities of man took up so great a part and share in religious duties among them, and the spirit of the Lord so little, if any at all; that he felt them of little or no use to him. On the contrary, he was often burthened with them, and pressed in spirit to lay open their carnal state under a Christian profession; and though they held the notions of the truth, it was not in the precious and experimental sense of the holy virtue and life of the truth; insomuch that he found it his duty to endeavor to break their false peace, and bewilder their lofty wisdom and profession; rather approving of a state of humble doubting, than hypocritical confidence; and that waiting for the Lord's coming in spirit, without sin, to the salvation of the soul, that people may truly know the Lord and his work, and from thence speak forth his praise to others, than profess

the enjoyments of other saints, that had been obtained through great tribulations, when they had never known any such thing in themselves, and so had no true sense of God's inward work, nor the true sacrifice of God's preparing to offer to him, which only is accepted with him.

This drew reproach upon him, as a man singular and censorious, from the worldly professors; particularly the clergy (that common eclipse between God and the souls of people); yet those that with him waited for the consolation of Israel, and the coming of the Son of man in power and great glory, they found him out, valued and honored him, and sweet was their fellowship to him; who boasted in nothing more than that they had nothing to boast of, whilst the Laodicea of their age thought she wanted nothing: and in that emptiness they waited to be filled of him that filleth all things at his coming and kingdom, that they might be the witnesses of his resurrection and appearance. Some of them died before that blessed time came; some saw it, and were glad, and with good old Simeon departed in peace: and others lived to see the glory of that blessed day both dawn and break forth upon them, to their admiration and comfort; among whom my dear father-in-law, Isaac Penington, was not the last, nor least of note.

About the year 1657, it pleased the Lord to send him a Peter to declare to him, that the time of the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit, and breaking forth of the heavenly work of God in the souls of men and women was come; and many Aquilas and Priscillas came after, who instructed him in the way of God more perfectly. And however he was advanced above many in his knowledge of scripture, and had formerly received many heavenly openings of truth's mysteries in the soul; yet did the Lord's way of appearance disappoint his expectation; and when the light broke forth in his heart, which his sincerity longed for, he found a great mixture, and that he had much to lose and part with, before he came to be that blessed little child (that new and heavenly birth) which inherits the kingdom of God; which

made him cry, "Narrow is the way, and strait is the gate, indeed, that leads to life."

But to the glory of the living God, and praise of this just man's memory, let me say, neither his worldly station, the most considerable of any that had closed with this way, nor the contradictions it gave to any former conceptions, nor the debasement it brought upon his learning and wisdom, nor yet that reproach and loss that attended his public espousing of it, did deter him from owning, and cordially embracing of it; but with an humble and broken spirit, he fell before this holy appearance of Jesus, that true light of men, whose power and life he felt revealed in him, to the saving of his soul; and boldly owned and confessed this spiritual coming of the great Messiah, that was able to teach him all things: to his Name his knee truly bowed, and the scripture was in him fulfilled; with Nathaniel he cried, "Thou art the Son of God! thou art the king of Israel!" Now he saw clearly between the precious and the vile in himself, between that which was truly of God, and that which was merely of man, in his former exercises; and he was not stiff nor stout in defence of his own building, and former conceivings: no; but sold all for the pearl, and became willingly a poor man in spirit, that so he might enter into the kingdom of God. Thus parting with all he had not received of God, he received a new stock from heaven, wherein God prospered him; the dew of heaven rested upon his branch and root, and he grew rich and fruitful in all heavenly treasure; "full of love, faith, mercy, patience, and long-suffering; diligent in the work of the Lord, and exemplary in his duty to God and men." Insomuch, that I may say he was one of a thousand; *zealous, yet tender; wise, yet humble: a constant and early comer to meetings, and watchful and reverent in them: one that ever loved power and life more than words; and as for that he waited, so would he be often deeply affected with it, and made to utter such testimonies as were greatly to the help of the poor and needy, the weary and heavy-laden, the true sojourner and traveller to the eternal rest and city of God.* To this his writings as well as ministry tended, as his ensuing worthy labors will abun-

dantly witness; wherein it will be easy for the reader to observe his peculiar and mighty love to the great professors of religion in these kingdoms, whom carnal apprehensions, or unjust prejudices, have hindered from closing with the blessed truth, as it is known and felt amongst us; and his fervent labor to remove those obstructions, with such tenderness, yet great clearness, that I may venture to style him their apostle; for as in almost every meeting, so in every book, the bent of his spirit was towards them, that those who made a more than ordinary profession of God, not without some ancient touches of the divine grace, and experience of God's visitation, though much extinguished with human and worldly mixtures, might come to know what that was they once tasted of, how they lost it, and which is the way to recover the living and full enjoyment of it, even the inward knockings and appearance of Jesus the Saviour, to the salvation of their souls: and I pray God they may answer his love (for he was much spent on their account); that so his ministry, writings, travels, and tears may not be matter of charge and evidence against them in the day of their judgment.

As his outward man grew in age, his inward man grew in grace, and the knowledge of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; for the excellency of which, he had justly counted all things else but as dross and dung: for it was observable among them that rightly knew him in his declining time, when the candle of his natural life burnt dimmer, his soul waxed stronger, and, like a replenished lamp, shined with greater luster; and truly he had a double portion of the spirit upon him, and was anointed with judgment and zeal for the Lord, which appeared in two eminent respects.

First, that he was very urgent that all those who knew any thing of the heavenly gift of ministry unto others, would always wait in their several exercises to be endued with matter and power from on high, before they opened their mouths in a testimony for the Lord; and that at all times, as well out of meetings as in them, they might live so near the Lord, as to feel the key of David opening the mysteries of

the heavenly kingdom, and by experiencing the depth of the heavenly travail, and the trials, deliverances, and consolations of it, with that dominion and victory that in the end, by perseverance, are obtained, they might be as true saviours on Mount Zion, the salt and lights of the world, thoroughly furnished to every good word and work, and master-builders in God's house; that "a pure and living stream of ministry might be continued and conveyed to the generations to come; that they might not only hear, but taste of, what we have known of the word and work of life and redemption in our age." Herein he was very careful.

But his excellency in the second respect, was his fervent love to the heavenly union of brethren; and whatever struck at that, though under ever such specious pretences, he no sooner perceived it, and the subtle but mischievous workings of it, than with deep wisdom he detected, and with his whole might encountered and opposed it.

And though by nature he was suffering to a degree of letting his mercy to others almost wound his own soul, yet so deeply did his love to the Lord and his people, and to that comely order God had settled them in, engage his soul, that he was as bold as a lion, yea, as warlike as a champion, against that spirit that went up and down to sow jealousies, to smite and reflect upon the holy care of the brethren, carnally interpreting their tender love and great pains, as if what was done by them were not intended to the edification of the body, but exaltation of some particular persons over it. This ingratitude and injustice his soul abhorred, and often mourned for such as were so seduced; as if it were the design of those that had from the beginning laid out themselves in the service of God and his people, to bring them at last to a blind and unwarrantable subjection, that they might the better exercise dominion over them. This evil eye he helped to put out; and, in his opposition to this wandering and destroying spirit that leads out of the love and unity of brethren, he approved himself a valiant of Israel, a Phineas for the God of his salvation; and the rewards of heaven were poured into his bosom; for his holy ministry

manifestly increased in life and power, and his peace flowed as a river, and many were the witnesses of his enlargements. Let those that have lost their first love, and are gone from their ancient habitation, "rage, and imagine vain things," if they will: surely the travails and testimonies of this blessed man will be a witness against them that will not easily be silenced, and a burthen upon their backs that will not be easily taken off. But because he desired not their destruction, but prayed earnestly to the last for their return, let not me, whilst I am writing of his character, fall short of his compassions; no, I pray God also with my whole spirit that they may repent, be contrite in heart, and faithfully return; at which, if the angels in heaven, certainly the spirits of the just that dwell in heavenly places, will abundantly rejoice too.

These two cares were chiefly and almost continually before him. Thus he drew near to the grave, and I now draw to an end; but because this service is never to be done again, let me say, that as he was a light in the church, so he was a blessing to his own family: "*A most chaste and loving husband, a very tender and prudent father, and a just and kind master.*" I will add, "*and a good neighbor, and a most secret and firm friend;*" of all unapt to believe ill, but never to report it, much less to do it to any: a man that ruled his tongue, swift to hear, slow to speak: but, when he did speak, he was serious, yet sweet, and not uncheerful. What shall I say, but that great and many were the gifts God honored him with, and with them he truly honored his profession.—Being thus fit to live, he was prepared to die, and had nothing else to do when that summons was served upon him, which was in the sixty-third year of his age; at what time it pleased the Lord he fell very sick, under a sharp and painful distemper, which hastened his dissolution: however, the anguish of that bitter exercise could give no shake to internal peace, so well established before it came; but he died, as he lived, in the faith that overcomes the world; whose soul, being now released from the confinements of time, and the frailties of mortality, is ascended into the glorious freedom and undisturbed joys of the just, where, with

his holy brethren the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs of Jesus, he forever blesseth and praiseth the God and Father of the righteous generations by Jesus Christ, God's Lamb, and our heavenly Redeemer: to whom with the Father be all honor, glory, might, majesty, and dominion, through all the ages of his church, and forever. Amen.

WILLIAM PENN.

Westminster, the 12th of the 12th month, 1680-81.

The Testimony of GEORGE WHITEHEAD, *concerning* ISAAC PENINGTON.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.
PSAL. cxvi. 15.

THAT the Lord God, who is the Father of mercies, is truly good unto all that wait for him, and diligently seek after him, hath been signally manifested and experienced in our days, as in former ages; and that he fails not to answer the desire and travail of that soul that hath sincerity towards him, however it be for a time clouded and bewildered under various professions and notions: sincerity and honesty of heart in inquiring after the knowledge of truth shall not be disappointed, nor miss of its blessed end. I hope I shall not need to write an apology for this man's many writings; but let the sincere meaning and honest intent thereof, and the lines of true sense and good-will therein, speak forth the Christian mind and spirit of the author. Nor is it altogether proper for me to apologize in such a case, having not read all these his books and writings now to be exposed to public view, though some of them I have at times formerly conversed with, as opportunities have admitted: which, as I have perceived the testimonies and instructions thereof to be both savory and experimental, so I charitably believe and hope of the rest. But in this I can be more general

and absolute concerning the person; that he was a man that sincerely sought after the knowledge of the Lord God and his holy truth; and that accordingly the Lord did vouchsafe graciously to answer the sincere desires of his soul in due time, to the settling of his mind, and staying his soul in a secret sense and feeling of his living truth, power, and spirit, to his confirmation in that most precious and living faith which was once delivered unto the saints in light: and as God opened his heart to the tender reception of his holy truth and gospel of peace, and embracing the faithful messengers thereof; so he wrought both immediately by his spirit, and instrumentally by his messengers, for his confirmation in that light and grace, from whence he had often before received many true discoveries, sights, and openings; having also often heard the sound of that divine breath, or spirit of life, which moved in his heart, before the immortal birth thereof was brought to light, or the man-child (for which his soul travailed) was brought forth into the world. He was not willing to obscure his divine discoveries, nor to put his candle under a bushel, nor hide his talent in the earth; but was industrious on the Lord's behalf, in telling and showing to the sons of men what discoveries he had made to him of the way of life and salvation, from one degree to another. His inward exercise of mind, and attention upon our Lord Jesus Christ in his light, were serious, and his conversation innocent; for he knew the presence and blessings of God were only to be enjoyed in such a condition. The remembrance of his zeal for the holy truth in the improvement of his gift is never to be extinguished, nor the record of his integrity and faithfulness ever to be obliterated: his tenderness and compassion towards the misled captives were such, that he was not wanting in his industrious endeavors for their deliverance out of their darkness, and spiritual blindness of thraldom. He earnestly labored with the barren professors under various notions, and the fleshly Christians of our times, to invite them to the true light, life, and spirit of Christianity, that they might not stick in their empty forms, and literal professions, short of the power of

godliness. For his eye was to the principle of life, the true seed wherein the blessing is, and to the spiritual, immortal birth, that breathes to God, and receives life, nourishment, and strength from him, and lives to him, as knowing that the fleshly birth must not inherit the promise, nor the son of the bond-woman be heir with the son of the free. He truly esteemed of the Holy Scriptures, and seriously and frequently conversed with them: his eye being to that divine light and spirit of Christ Jesus, which opens them, and gives the true understanding and experience of them; for he preferred the true and spiritual knowledge of the Holy Scriptures before all literal knowledge and understanding, exalting the spirit above the letter, the power above the form, the substance above the shadow; as knowing that the Holy Spirit and Power was the foundation and cause of scriptures, and form of godliness. His patience and innocency have been well known, even towards such contentious and prejudicate professors as evilly requited his labors of love (for their good) by perversely exposing him in print: but he well knew that truth and innocence would outlive all envy and evil-mindedness. It was given to him not only to believe, but also patiently to suffer for the name of Christ; he patiently suffered by reproaches, contradictions of evil men, persecutions and imprisonments. I cannot forget the sweet communion and society in the truth which we have often had together, especially of latter years; being fully satisfied, that it was a real earnest of that glorious communion we shall eternally enjoy together in rest and glory, where the precious and sincere soul is entered with the Lord and all his saints and angels, and spirits of just men made perfect, who are written in heaven, having obtained a part in Christ Jesus, the resurrection and the life, where the second death hath no power. And to this glorious end and rest from our labors, others of us yet surviving are travelling and hastening; glory and triumph for ever!

Now, serious reader, in love to the truth and thy soul, I would leave this caution with thee in relation to the books and writings of this our deceased friend and brother, that if

thou meetest with any thing therein which thou dost not understand, censure it not; be not prejudicate in any case, but wait till the Lord come, who reveals secrets, and unfolds mysteries. And if any thing (especially of what was early written, as in a time of infancy) seems doubtful, or not so clear to thy understanding, let it have such charitable construction as becomes a Christian spirit towards an industrious, honest-hearted, and well-meaning servant of Christ in his lifetime, who was and is ever blessed of the Lord, and now gone to his rest from his labors; the general tenor and import whereof clearly evince his pious endeavors for the good of the children of men, and proclaim his Christian design and industry to promote truth and righteousness in the earth, pure religion, and Christianity in spirit and life among men. The Lord of the harvest send forth more fruitful laborers into his harvest and vineyard! for the harvest is great.

G. W.

London, the 28th of the
6th month, 1680.

The Testimony of SAMUEL JENNINGS, *concerning that faithful Servant of the* LORD, *and our dear Friend,* ISAAC PENINGTON, *whom* GOD *hath lately removed from us, and fixed in his Eternal Rest.*

STRONG and powerful is that excellent arm of the Lord, which hath been revealed and made bare in this our day; and very effectual hath been the operation of it for the gathering of many into a nearness to the Lord, and leavening of them into the nature of its own purity; amongst whom God hath numbered this our dear friend, and dignified him with that honor. And since God hath impressed upon our souls such a sense of him, I could not be clear, in respect of my duty to God, and love to him, to shut it up only in my own bosom, without giving this public testimony of him. Although I know I can add nothing to him, as to his immediate enjoyment, yet let it be as an evidence of the

esteem I had of him when with us, and of his memorial, now removed from us, which God will perpetuate among the righteous, when the name of the wicked shall rot.

As to the innocency of his conversation in general (which is the most evident token of the indwellings of truth and sincerity), I have this to say upon my own observation of it, I know none that did exceed him: for in that God made him an adorning to the doctrine of the gospel. To mention particularly those divine gifts wherewith he was eminently endued, would be too large, yet I cannot wholly omit them; wherefore I shall first mention that which had the first and chiefest place with him; namely, his deep travail, labor, care, and desires for the prosperity of that weighty and blessed work, which God is carrying on in the earth; to wit, the gathering of lost man to himself, and bringing him to know salvation in him; in which labor God blessed him with success, and gave him the tongue of the learned to speak a word in due season, fitly comparable to apples of gold in pictures of silver; and by the force of this word he reached to many, to the turning of them from the evil of their ways; which remains as a crown upon him, and shall cause him to shine as a bright fixed star in the firmament of God for ever. And how many living witnesses are left behind, of the use and service that God made him to be of to them, who are deeply affected with the sense of their loss in him, yet dare not complain, because the Lord hath done it! Oh, how hath my soul, with many others, been consolated with him, in the communion we have had together with God, when the Lord hath opened his mouth in wisdom, and caused his doctrine to drop as the rain, and his speech to distil as dew on the tender plants!

O my dear brother! (or rather to many of us wast thou, in God, a father) my soul is often pained, in the sense of thy absence, for our sakes: yet greatly comforted and satisfied in God for thy sake: for our loss, though great, doth not equal thy gain. Oh, how often hast thou been opened, and thy spirit sweetened, and in that sweetness drawn forth to those that were Israelites indeed, when thy

words were softer than oil, sweeter than honey, and more refreshing than the purest wine; but to the wicked and deceitful as penetrating arrows. And although it was so contrary to his nature to touch with strife (being of so meek a spirit), yet God, that guides the meek in judgment, did sometimes concern him in a dreadful yet true testimony against all that would divide in Jacob, and scatter in Israel. Yet how entire was his love to all those who had a right value of, and abode in, the unity of the pure truth, against all the contemners and invaders of it! How affectionately and reverently have I heard him speak of those, who were the messengers of glad tidings to us, and publishers of that peace which he is now in the certain possession of, as the reward and end of the just and upright! but especially great were his regard to, and esteem of, those who have faithfully borne the heat and burthen of the day; whose arrows the Lord directed to the wounding of the man of sin, and who yet remain as a bow that abides in its strength, and wax yet stronger and stronger: those he did account (as indeed they are) worthy of double honor. And although, through the infirmity of his nature, and weakness of his constitution, he was made unfit for much hard and public travel; yet his constant practice did declare he had a vigorous and active mind, truly bowed to the service of truth, as may appear by the many private and seasonable visits he made by writing, unto those whom he had no other opportunity of being helpful to; and much service he had of this kind, beyond what many were sensible of. Many young and tender and distressed ones will lament their loss in him, who was so easily touched with a feeling of their exercise, from the sense and remembrance he had of his own; and was very ready, and also fit, to contribute something to their relief: for as he was once a man of sorrows, and well acquainted with grief, so this benefit did he reap by it, to learn experience by the things he suffered; and all the tribulation he met with did but make way for the superabounding of his consolation through Christ.

What he was in his family, and especially to his dear

and tender relations, (whom he left weeping behind him, though not without hope,) I shall not need to say much of; knowing they themselves cannot be without a larger testimony than mine concerning the matter: only this I shall say, I would to God there were more so fit for our example in each relation.

Having thus far sincerely discharged my duty in giving this testimony, I am willing to confine myself to as much brevity as I can; though much more might be truly said of him, and it is hard to say so little. Yet, for further satisfaction to any concerning him, that are desirous of it, I refer them to his writings, now published together, for common benefit: only let me give the reader this advice, that as God gave him wisdom to divide his word aright, so do thou read it in the same wisdom to receive it aright; for in that only, canst thou take a right measure of him, or have true fellowship with him. I have only this to add, as a caution to all, that as truth hath many enemies, so this our dear friend, for truth's sake, hath some also; concerning whom I have a feeling that they will be ready to grudge and take offence at this our innocent and justifiable practice, to preserve the remembrance of the faithfulness of those who have faithfully finished their course, and, through the power of Christ, have had victory over the last enemy. There can be no other ground for this, but envy or ignorance; and therefore, to prevent so ill an effect (let it spring from whom it will), let such know, that it was once not only allowed, but commanded of God, to write the dead blessed that die in the Lord, as well as to esteem them so. And since it is undeniably the mind of God "that the just shall be had in everlasting remembrance;" what can be more effectual to it, than by our written testimony to commend their memorial to our posterity, that they may glorify the God of their fathers, and, after their example, walk in his way; in which the Lord, who gathered us into it, preserve us to the time of our death, that, with the worthies of the Lord that are gone before us, we may receive the crown of life.

SAMUEL JENNINGS.

The Testimony of THOMAS ZACHARY, *for* ISAAC PENINGTON.

AH! my dear and ancient friend! what shall I say of thee? Thou hast been a long traveller, even from thy youth, through Egypt and Babylon, and therein desolate, seeking rest, but finding none; till the Lord God, the Shepherd of Israel (who heard thy bemoanings), found thee out, and gathered thee by his Shepherd's crook out of and from all the barren mountains, and wild, obscure places, wherein thou wast wearied and lost; even in the wilderness did the Lord allure thee, and bring thee out to his own flock, to hear and know his own voice from the voice of all strange spirits, and to feed among his lambs in the pastures of life; whereby thou grewest strong in the living word of power, and hadst wherewith to minister of the words of life plentifully to others, through the divine presence and overflowing life of the Father in thee and with thee; whereby many have been awakened, strengthened, and comforted in the Lord alone, and the very joy of God's salvation hath reached to the mourners of Israel. Ah! a true laborer hast thou been in God's vineyard; and sowed, in much brokenness of heart, and tears, the precious seed of God's kingdom, and waited in the faith and patience for the coming up thereof, and hast seen the desire of thy soul answered; and now is thy work, labor, and travail over; and as thou hast sowed in the Spirit, thou art now reaping of the Spirit, life everlasting, and art released out of this strait and troublesome world, wherein thou wert long a stranger and sufferer, and hadst no resting-place in it; for thou earnestly soughtest for a city that had foundations, whose builder and maker was God alone; and now thou hast found it, and art gathered into it, inheriting thy own mansion of peace, rest, and joy, which the God of the just hath provided for thee.

Oh, blessed and praised be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is not the God of the dead, but of the living! and from the living ascend heavenly praises and hallelujahs to him for ever and ever.

THOMAS ZACHARY.

The Testimony of AMBROSE RIGGE, *of the Life and Death of* ISAAC PENINGTON.

THE Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and the fountain of love and life is open in my soul, and freely floweth towards all my dear brethren and fellow-laborers in the great harvest of our Lord and Master, who are yet in the body; and the renewed remembrance of them whose earthly tabernacles are dissolved, and have put on immortality, is often with me in endeared love; in which at this time I behold dear Isaac Penington, in lasting union with us, though absent in body; whose work and labor of love in his day are not forgotten of God, nor his people. He was brought to the true fold in an early hour of the gospel day, as it broke forth in our times, and a rest was prepared for him in a weary land; and the Lord heard the cry of his soul in the deep, and prepared a deliverer for him, out of the great sea of waves, troubles, and uncertainties; and he came to the rock with joy when he saw him, and he built upon him, and was established and fortified against every storm and tempest of the boisterous seas, which lifted up themselves against him; and they were not a few, nor of small consequence: his trials were great, both inward and outward, in which he quitted himself as a valiant champion in the Lamb's war. The Lord was with him, and delivered him out of all his troubles, and filled his cup, and often caused it to overflow, to the refreshment of many; and freely he dealt his bread to the hungry, and his cup he handed to the thirsty: many widows and fatherless were relieved by him; his life flowing forth as a fountain most clear, both to the freed and imprisoned seed: a man of a contrite and humble spirit, in the innocency of a little child, by which he had entrance into the kingdom of immortality; where he now resteth, out of the reach of the oppressor. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; his life was a pilgrimatory passage to eternity.—Who can say he oppressed them, or was chargeable to

them; though part of his outward substance he lost for the truth's testimony? He was a man filled with the power and spirit of the Lord; who, both in word, writing, and conversation, gave testimony to the world that he sought a city whose builder and maker was God. He was a faithful witness for the saving truth, against all bad spirits and unsound members, unmeet for that body which God hath now prepared to do his will: and his manuscripts left behind proclaim him a witness against all false hirelings and their unrighteous practices and deceitful doctrines, whereby the earth both is, and hath for ages been corrupted; and the minds of young and old filled with unsound principles and beliefs in the weighty things relating to another world; and give a true and lasting testimony to the strait and narrow path of life and righteousness. He was endowed with wisdom to discover the living child's mother, and give her the possession; for the spirit of a discerning and of a sound mind was in him, and the secrets of the Lord were upon his tabernacle. His upright Christian spirit rendered him lovely to the upright, and formidable to the wicked. My heart is full of tender love to his life, who died in the Lord, and his works follow him; and therefore doth my soul believe him blessed with the righteous in his death. He was a man of a retired spirit, and little minded the things of this life; but loved justice, and delighted in mercy. The products of his life were the fruits of the Spirit of Truth, therefore he is recorded among the living as one of the Lord's worthies, whose remembrance shall live to generations to come. His testimony he kept to the end, and finished his course with joy; so, on his behalf, let the living praise the Lord, as doth my soul at this time; even so for ever.

AMBROSE RIGGE.

Gatton in Surry, the 22nd of the 10th month, 1679.

The Testimony of ROBERT JONES, *concerning* ISAAC PENINGTON.

IN the remembrance of my dear friend deceased, I had something lived with me, to give in as in a way of testimony, according to the knowledge and sense I had of him. He was a man very tender in spirit, and of a broken heart before the Lord, as I often had a living sense thereof; the sense of the power of an endless life being often upon him, which did affect many, breaking them down in great tenderness. His testimony for the Lord and his blessed truth was very sound and weighty, to the reaching the consciences of many. His labor in writing was in great tenderness, to the gathering of the scattered, to the building up of the convinced, and to the comfort and consolation of the broken-hearted; for great were the bowels of mercy in him, even to all, especially to such who had breathings in their hearts after the Lord, and the way of his holiness; his travail was greatly for such; and by his tenderness in the Lamb's spirit he had an influence upon many, by reaching to the good in them; for his bowels were moved for them. Well! his reward is with the Lord for ever. In his family he was a man of knowledge, and of true watchfulness, that all those that were under his care might be kept savory in all things; being as a weaned child from the world, and those things that perish with the using. His moderation in all things was well known to many. What shall I say? He was a man wholly devoted in his heart to serve the Lord his God; yea, I am persuaded it was his delight to do his will. I have had knowledge of him near twenty years, especially in suffering; for it pleased the Lord so to order it, that our lot fell together in prison several times; and I may say it was well it was so; for being made willing by the power of God (that did attend him) to suffer with great patience, cheerfulness, contentedness, and true nobility of spirit, he was a good example to me and others. I do not remember that ever I saw him cast down or dejected in his spirit in the time of his close confinement, nor speak hardly of those that

persecuted him; for he was of that temper as to love his enemies, and to do good to those that hated him; having received a measure of that virtue from Christ, his Master, that taught him so to do. Indeed I may say, in the prison he was a help to the weak, being made instrumental in the hand of the Lord for that end; with much more than at present I shall express. Oh, the remembrance of the glory that did often overshadow us in the place of confinement! so that indeed the prison was made by the Lord to us (who was powerfully with us) as a pleasant palace! I was often, with many more, by those streamings of life that did many times run through his vessel, greatly overcome with the pure presence, and overcoming love of our God that was plentifully shed abroad in our hearts. If I should look back, and call to remembrance my knowledge further of him, I could write much; but this short testimony, readily springing up in my heart, was with me to give forth in the behalf of my dear friend. And this further I have to add; indeed when I heard of his departure, it came near me; but considering how it was with him, being fully persuaded he was fitted for his change, in the will of the Lord I was satisfied, counting his state happy; having faith in God that he had laid down his head in peace, and entered into endless glory, where sorrow shall be no more; having done the work his Master (Christ the Lord) gave him to do. He kept the faith to the end, and has finished his course with joy, leaving a good savor behind him. With his spirit my soul has union. At the writing hereof, my heart is broken into tenderness, and mine eyes run over with tears. Oh! let us follow after him in faithfulness, fulfilling what is behind of our testimony for the Lord and his truth, being faithful to the death, as our brother that is gone before us was (who has left a good example behind him); so will the crown of life be our portion for ever! That it may be so with my own soul, and with the souls of all my tender brethren and sisters everywhere, is the cry of my heart to the Lord my God; and I hope it will be so till time shall be no more with me in this world.

ROBERT JONES.

The Testimony of THOMAS EVERDEN, *concerning* ISAAC PENINGTON.

CONCERNING our dear friend and brother Isaac Penington, I have a testimony riseth in my heart.

I, with many thousands more in this our age, day, and generation, have cause to admire, bless, praise, and magnify the name of the Lord God of heaven and earth, in that he hath so largely manifested himself in the hearts of male and female, to the tendering their hearts, and enlightening their understandings; and to the gathering them out of the empty professions, and by-ways, and crooked paths of this world, and to the purifying and sanctifying their hearts by his powerful word; and giving them a good understanding in the knowledge of himself, and the deep mysteries of his heavenly kingdom; and enabling many of them, in the openings and motion of the same life and power, to speak and write, to the answering unto the witness of God in many, and for the joy, comfort, and establishment of others. I can truly say, dear Isaac Penington was one of that number; for after full seven years travail and deep exercise of mind among the empty professions, and that God had showed me mercy in drawing a little nearer to me, and shining by his glorious light into my conscience, whereby I came to see the formality of professors, and the emptiness of all forms and professions that stood in man's will, and the vileness of my own heart, and the necessity of being saved and sanctified; and that there was no other way, but through and by the light of Christ Jesus, that had wrought thus powerfully to convince me; then did some of this good man's writings come to my view, which answered to the light, life, and truth, which was raised of the Lord in my heart, as face answers face in a glass; I can truly say, to my joy and comfort and consolation and establishment in the truth. So that the life and testimony of him were and are truly precious to me, and to all the faithful; and he shall be had in everlasting remembrance, who, in the time of his life, was a true subject in the kingdom of Jesus, and a faithful

laborer in his vineyard, and sufferer for the truth, in the patience of the Lamb: whose delight was to devote himself to retiredness, and to wait upon God, to feel his powerful love to abound in his tender heart (this he accounted his greatest glory and riches); by which he was made entirely to love, and have a good esteem of, his faithful brethren in the truth; and was a man of peace and love to all, and greatly delighted in the love and unity of the brethren; and where the contrary appeared, it grieved his tender heart. And glad I am that it was my lot to be with him the two last meetings that he was at; the first of which was in the city of Canterbury, I being at that time very weak in body; and it lay upon me from the Lord to go to the meeting, where I found him, together with Friends, waiting in silence upon the Lord; and when I had sat down with them, oh, the mighty power of the Lord God that descended upon us! so that I could say the fountain of the great deeps was opened! and oh, the powerful, pleasant, and crystal streams, how did they abundantly flow into our hearts! And his cup was made to overflow, to the watering and refreshing of the tender-hearted; so that God did make me a witness of the seal of his testimony, with many more, at those two last meetings, as at some other times, where the life and power of God did abound in him, and sweetly flow from him. And fully satisfied I am that the Lord hath taken him in a good time, and from the evil to come; and that he hath laid down his head in rest and everlasting peace with the Lord, where he is "at rest from his labors, and his works follow him;" and is in a full and perpetual enjoyment of life and glory. And although his body be in the dust, yet his life speaks, and his name is precious, and shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

Farewell, dear Isaac! bless'd man of peace and love;
Thou art i'th'glorious rest of God above.
And this upon my heart the Lord hath sealed;
For by his Spirit to me it is revealed.

THOMAS EVERDEN.

The Testimony of CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR, *for* ISAAC PENINGTON.

BLESSED be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of all his holy ones, from the beginning of the world until now; who hath kept all his by his mighty power and terrible name; who, in all ages and generations, and under all ministrations and dispensations, have feared and served him: glory be to his name for ever. And he hath been a God of eternal love unto them, and it hath been his banner spread over them, and is at this day, and hath been in all ages, and they have faithfully served him, and offered holy offerings unto him, in his pure fear and reverence, from the sense of his living and pure streaming love; and the blessing of God hath been and is with them, and his glory he still puts upon them, that they may bring forth unto him; and in the end, when they have faithfully served the Lord in their day and generation, they may return to their long home, and be at rest with God for ever, their portion for evermore.

Of this number was dear Isaac Penington; a worthy man in his generation, dearly beloved of his God, and preserved by him; so that many can say how dear he was unto them whilst he lived amongst them! And though dead, he yet liveth and speaketh in those pure and holy testimonies he hath borne unto truth, both in word and writing; so that many hearts can testify and bear witness that he was truly sent of God to publish his most blessed and holy name; for he was a tender-spirited man, and dear to the Lord, and near unto his heart, where he tenderly lived and breathed, that in all things he might do his sacred will. Ah! dear Isaac Penington was a man near and dear unto my soul, as he was unto many others, because of his inward tender-spiritedness! And methinks I feel him still in the course of his life, since I have of late years more especially known him. He was a man truly endued with humility; and when we have been together, and he would open his heart unto me, it would so answer my own life, and the exercises of my

own condition, that my heart would be so affected with joy, that with melting bowels of God's eternal love we have often met and saluted each other; and I may say, dear brother Isaac Penington, thou livest indeed, and my soul lives with thee. And what happiness is it, that though dear and tender friends may be outwardly parted, yet are they dearly united together in the Lord Jesus! And my soul at this time is overcome, melted, and broken within me, at the dear remembrance of thee. Oh! dear Isaac liveth, and his life is with us, and not separated from us. And I pray God that every one who now professeth the holy name of God may live as he did, in the singleness of their hearts; entirely, above all things, pressing to be united unto the holy power of God alone! His cries were daily to God, that all truth's professors might be really possessors of eternal life; and his ministry was accompanied with a holy, heavenly zeal, in the opening life of God's eternal power and wisdom; so that the true birth within would many times leap at the sweet salutation of his life; and the tender power of God, that spoke through him, would preciously raise the life in others to a sweet harmoniousness, livingly to praise God: for what he innocently and humbly aimed at, both in his words and writings (I can testify with many others), was God's pure glory. An entire innocent man he was, without guile in his heart; a true Nathaniel indeed; a lovely instrument in God's hand to the turning many to righteousness, both by word and writing; a true friend to all that waited for God's salvation everywhere; and such who labored under inward exercises and travails of soul, he travailed with and for, and ministered unto many such, both by word and writing, that they might come to be led by the spirit of true sanctification, and know God's salvation.

About thirty years since, as I remember, in the North of England, I met with a book of Isaac Penington's, which had this scripture following, as the subject whereof he treated: Job, xxxviii. 2. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" This scripture, and the matter of his discourse upon it in that book, at that time I was

affected with; for at that time, I, with others, had precious openings of many heavenly things; being then sensible that no man could be a minister of Christ Jesus without the work of regeneration wrought in his own heart; and not only so, but he must be sent of God to publish the everlasting gospel, in the alone evidence of his power and Spirit, without the mixture of his own will, and observing his own time when to speak, and also to be silent; so that we believed and were convinced it was to be a spiritual ministry, and to be dispensed in the motion and evidence of the same Spirit, otherwise it was "a darkening of counsel by words without knowledge." This was my condition, with many others at that time, because we spent many precious openings upon our own wills, and the wills and lusts of others.

Now this I bring to signify that dear Isaac Penington, in those days, had precious openings of truth, and was a man waiting for the kingdom of God, to be further instructed therein, and came to attain the end of his divine breathings and heavenly desires. And those that honestly, in the fear of God, read his writings, may see how clearly he hath writ concerning the things of God's kingdom; that so both small and great, professors and profane, may, as in a glass, see their conditions; and those that as yet have not repented, may consider betimes, and repent, lest they perish.

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR.

The Testimony of MARY PENINGTON, *concerning her dear Husband* ISAAC PENINGTON.

WHILST I keep silent touching thee, O thou blessed of the Lord and his people! my heart burneth within me. I must make mention of thee, for thou was a most pleasant plant of renown, planted by the right hand of the Lord, and "thou tookest deep rooting downwards, and sprangest upward." The dew of heaven fell on thee, and made thee fruitful, and thy fruit was of a fragrant smell, and most delightful. Oh,

where shall I begin to recount the Lord's remarkable dealings with thee! He set his love on thee, O thou one of the Lord's peculiar choice, to place his name on! Wast not thou sanctified in the womb? Thy very babish days declared of what stock and lineage thou wert. Thou desiredst after "the sincere milk of the word, as a new-born babe," even in the bud of thy age. Oh, who can declare how thou hast travelled towards the holy land in thy very infancy as to days! Oh, who can tell what thy soul hath felt in thy travel! Oh, thou was gotten to be in the mount with the Lord, and his spiritual Moses, when the princes and elders saw but his back-parts, and feared and quaked to hear the terrible thunderings in Mount Sinai. The breast of consolation was held out to thee early, and thou suckedst thy fill, till the vessel could no longer contain; for thou couldst not in that fulness "see God and live" in this tabernacle: so that thou besoughtest the Lord to abate this exceeding excellent glory, and give thee such a measure as was food convenient. Oh, the heavenly, bright, living openings that were given to thee many years past! His light shone round about thee, and the book of the creatures was opened to thee; and his mysteries (made known to holy men of old, who spoke them forth as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost) were made known to thee to discern. Such a state as I have never known any in, in that day, have I heard thee declare of. Oh, this did it please the Lord to withdraw and shut up as in one day, and so leave thee desolate, and mourning many a day; weary of the night and of the day; poor and naked; sad, distressed, and bowed down. Thou refusedst to be comforted, because it was a time of night, and not day; and because he that was gone was not come. His time of manifesting his love was not at hand; but he was as a stranger, or one gone into a far country, not ready to return; and thou wouldst accept of no beloved in his absence, but testifiedst that he thy soul longed for was not in this or that observation, nay, nor opening; but thy beloved, when he came, would sit as a refiners's fire, and would come with "his fan in his hand, and thoroughly purge his floor." No

likeness, or appearance, or taking sound of words, or visions, or revelations, wouldst thou take up with, instead of him that was life indeed. Oh, the many years thou puttest thy mouth in the dust, and wentest softly, and bowed down, and hadst anguish of soul, weeping and groaning, panting and sighing! Oh, who can tell the one half of the bitterness of thy soul! Because substance was in thine eye, all shadows did fly away from before thee. Thou couldst not feed on that which was not bread from heaven. In this state I married thee, and my love was drawn to thee; because I found thou sawest the deceit of all notions, and layest as one that "refused to be comforted" by any thing that had the appearance of religion, till HE came to his temple, who is "truth, and no lie." For all those shows of religion were very manifest to thee, so that thou wert sick and weary of them all. And in this my heart cleft to thee, and a desire was in me to be serviceable to thee in this desolate condition: for thou wast alone and miserable in this world, and I gave up much to be a companion to thee in this thy suffering. Oh! my sense, my sense of thee and thy state in that day, even makes me as one dumb; for the greatness of it is beyond my capacity to utter.

This little testimony to thy hidden life, my dear and precious one, in a day and time when none of the Lord's gathered people knew thy face, nor were in any measure acquainted with thy many sorrows, and deep wounds and distresses, have I stammered out, that it might not be forgotten that thou wast in the land of the living, and thy fresh springs were in God, and light was on thy Goshen, when thick darkness covered the people. But now that the day is broken forth, and thou wert so eminently gathered into it, and a faithful publisher of it, I leave this bright state of thine to be declared of by the "sons of the morning," who have been witnesses of the rising of that "bright star of righteousness in thee," and its guiding thee to the Saviour, even Jesus, "the first and the last:" they, I say, who are "strong, and have overcome the evil one," and are fathers in Israel, have declared of thy life in God, and have published

it in many testimonies here to the glorious saving truth, that thou wert partaker of, livedst and passedst hence in, as in a fiery chariot, into the eternal habitation with the holy saints, prophets, and apostles of Jesus.

Ah me! he is gone! he that none exceeded in kindness, in tenderness, in love inexpressible to the relation as a wife. Next to the love of God in Christ Jesus to my soul, was his love precious and delightful to me. My bosom-one! that was as my guide and counsellor! my pleasant companion! my tender sympathizing friend! as near to the sense of my pain, sorrow, grief and trouble as it was possible. Yet this great help and benefit is gone; and I, a poor worm, *a very little one to him, compassed about with many infirmities*, through mercy let him go without an unadvised word of discontent, or inordinate grief. Nay, further; such was the great kindness the Lord showed to me in that hour, that my spirit ascended with him in that very moment that his spirit left his body; and I saw him safe in his own mansion, and rejoiced with him, and was at that instant gladder of it, than ever I was of enjoying him in the body. And from this sight my spirit returned again to perform my duty to his outward tabernacle, to the answer of a good conscience.

This testimony to dear Isaac Penington is from the greatest loser of all that had a share in his life.

This was written at my house, at Woodside, the 27th of the 2nd month, 1680, between 12 and 1 at night, whilst I was watching with my sick child.

MARY PENINGTON.

The TESTIMONY *of* THOMAS ELLWOOD, *concerning* ISAAC PENINGTON.

ALTHOUGH I am not ignorant that many weighty and living testimonies have been already given in by true and faithful witnesses upon the same occasion, which might well seem sufficient to excuse mine; yet am I not thereby clear, but

find a pressing upon my spirit to write a few lines also concerning this my dear deceased friend; to which, I confess, I am induced, and in some sort engaged, by the double obligation of affection and gratitude. Love him I did, and that entirely, and sure I am, very deservedly; for he was worthy indeed of love from all men, but more especially from me, to whom he had been abundantly kind: for in the day wherein it pleased the Lord to awaken my soul, and call me out of the pollutions of the world, with respect alike to worship and conversation, (for which I became the derision of my country, the scorn and contempt of my familiars and acquaintance, and in a manner an outcast also, exposed as it were in the world to shift in it,) how welcome was I then to him! how affectionately did he receive me! how regardfully did he take care of me! how tenderly and like a father did he watch over me, that I might not be drawn back, or any way be betrayed from the simplicity of truth, as I had received it! And can I ever forget his love, or let his manifold kindness slip out of my mind! Oh no; the remembrance of him is pleasant to me, and I think not of him without delight: for as a friend, I truly loved him; as a father (for such his care of me rendered him to me), I reverenced him; as an elder, I honored him, and that (as he right well deserved) with double honor. My spirit was truly united to his; yea, my soul was linked and knit unto him in the holy covenant of life, which death hath not been able to dissolve. Bear with me therefore a little, I entreat thee, whoever thou art, under whose eye these lines may chance to fall, if I take liberty to express my sense of this my beloved friend; wherein if I seem somewhat particular, know that my acquaintance with him was so.

He was naturally furnished with a sharp and excellent wit, and that well cultivated and polished with an ingenuous and liberal education; his disposition was courteous and affable, free from pride and affectation. His ordinary discourse cheerful and pleasant, neither morose nor light, but innocently sweet, and tempered with such a serious gravity, as rendered his converse both delightful and profitable.

From his childhood (as I have heard him occasionally say) he was religiously inclined, and sought the Lord in his tender years. And although the way of truth was not then so cast up unto him, as since, through the goodness of the Lord, it was; yet that he had then, at times, some true touches and tastes of life, some openings and sights of heavenly things, (though not so clear, unmixed, and abiding as after,) the treatises which he then wrote do manifestly declare.—And albeit, at the first manifestation of truth unto him in this present dispensation, he was not without doubts and jealousies concerning it, as himself relates; nor free for some time from disputes and reasonings against the meanness of its appearance, yet, after it pleased the Father, in the riches of his grace, to reveal his Son in him, thereby giving him to see, and certainly to know, what was that good and acceptable and perfect will of God; oh, how joyfully did he receive it! how willingly did he bow unto it! how readily did he yield his neck to the yoke of Christ! and how constantly and delightfully did he wear it! Did he then regard the pleasures of the times, or value the preferments and honors of the world, though living at that time in the favor and affluence of it? No, no: he turned his back upon it all; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; and casting down his crown at the foot of Jesus, he willingly became a fool to the world, and to the wisdom thereof, that he might be made truly wise to God. And surely he obtained his desire herein; for as he honored the Lord, and preferred him above all; so the Lord did highly honor him, and gave him liberally of the true and heavenly wisdom, adorned with humility; so that he was learned, and yet humble; full of knowledge (heavenly knowledge), yet not puffed up thereby. And as he had freely received of the Lord, so did he freely and readily communicate thereof (as the following sheets do witness) unto such as stood in need of counsel, advice, information, or direction in their travel to the heavenly country. To which service he was fitted and very well furnished by the experiences of his own travel; for the Lord had led him

through many a strait and difficulty; through many temptations, trials, and exercises, by which he had tried and proved him. Not only through the Red Sea and the Wilderness had he passed, but the bottom of Jordan also had he seen, and the upholding, delivering arm of the Lord through all had he known and felt; whereby he was able to speak a word of information to the bewildered passenger; a word of encouragement to the weary and fainting traveller; a word of comfort to the afflicted soul, and of consolation to the wounded spirit. And oh, how sweetly have I heard it flow from him! How has it dropped like the dew, and distilled like the gentle rain! Ah, how tender, how compassionate, how full of bowels and feeling sympathy was he! Surely his words have been many times as apples of gold in pictures of silver. For of a truth the Lord was with him, and his heavenly power did often fill his temple; and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and the fruits thereof were plentifully brought forth through him, in love, in joy, in peace, in long-suffering, in gentleness, in goodness, in faith, in meekness, and in temperance; so richly did the word of the Lord dwell in him. His delight was in the service of God, to which he was wholly given up, and in it spent most of his time, either publicly in meetings waiting upon God, or privately in visiting and ministering unto those that were distressed, or any way afflicted in mind or body; and when at home, he was frequent in retirements, and very inward with the Lord. Very fervent he was in prayer, and very frequent; for the Spirit of grace and supplication was plentifully poured upon him, by which he often wrestled with the Lord, and not in vain. The holy Scriptures he read much, and with great delight and profit: for he made it not a cursory or formal business, nor sought to pick out the meaning by his natural wit or learning; but, with a great composedness of mind, and reverence of spirit, waited to receive the true sense of them from the openings of that divine Spirit, by which the penmen of them were inspired. Great and strong was the travail of his spirit for the conversion of others; and in a more especial manner did

his love flow and bowels yearn after the professors of religion, for whom he continually and earnestly labored, both by word and writing (not ceasing to seek them to his dying day), that they might be brought off from the shadows, and come at length to inherit substance. And blessed be the Lord, by the powerful operation of the Spirit of God, through his ministry, many were turned to the truth, and many confirmed in it: for the Lord was with him, and spake by him; so that his teaching was with divine authority, in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. To the world, and the affairs of it, he was very much a stranger; but deeply experienced in the things of God: for his affection being set on things above, his conversation was in heaven, and his life hid with Christ in God. He was but a pilgrim on the earth, and is now gone home. In his family he was a true pattern of goodness and piety; not only by his grave example, but by his savory instructions and exhortations to godliness. To his wife he was a most affectionate husband; to his children, a loving and tender father; to his servants, a mild and gentle master; to his friends, a firm and fast friend; to the poor, compassionate and open-hearted; and to all, courteous and kind. Very zealous he was for the truth, unwearied in promoting it, bold and undaunted in the defence of it, faithful in his testimony to it, patient and cheerful in his suffering for it. A right good and pious man indeed was he; one that truly feared God, and warily eschewed evil.

How great and various his exercises were in the times of his former professions; how earnest and pressing his spirit then was after the pure enjoyment of God; how strange and admirable the dealings of the Lord were with him; and how far he came at length to see the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied; as himself of all men best knew; so he hath occasionally scattered here and there a hint thereof, in several pieces of the following books; which, for the reader's satisfaction, I had once thought to have collected and presented here together; but finding, amongst his loose papers, a summary account thereof, written with his own

hand, above a dozen years ago, when, being in bonds for Christ's sake, he was sick near unto death, I chose rather to transcribe that hither, and refer the more curious and industrious reader to the several books and papers of the ensuing volumes, wherein he hath touched the same subject; as namely, *The Way of Life and Death*, &c. in the preface, and in the postscript. *Babylon the Great described*, &c. *The scattered Sheep*, &c. *An Examination of the Grounds*, &c. and *A Glass for Professors. Where is the Wise? Observations on* Rom. xiv. 20. *Of the Church in its first and purest State. The holy Truth and People defended.* Not to enumerate each particular.

The account he gives of his spiritual travail is as followeth:

"A true and faithful relation, in brief, concerning myself, in reference to my spiritual travails, and the Lord's dealings with me. I say true and faithful, because it is of the truth, and not given forth in my own will, but in the Lord's will and requirings of me at this time, for his service. The relation is as follows:

"I have been a man of sorrow and affliction from my childhood, feeling the want of the Lord, and mourning after him: separated by him from the love, nature, and spirit of this world, and turned in spirit towards him, almost ever since I could remember.

"In the sense of my lost estate, I sought after the Lord; I read the Scripture; I watched over mine own heart; I cried unto the Lord for what I felt the want of; I blessed his name in what he mercifully did for me, and bestowed on me, &c. Whatever I read in the Scriptures as the way of God to my understanding, I gave myself to the faithful practice of; being contented to meet with all the reproach, opposition, and several kinds of sufferings, which it pleased the Lord to measure out to me therein. And I cannot but say that the Lord was good unto me, did visit me, did teach me, did help me, did testify his acceptance of me many times, to the refreshing and joy of my heart before him.

"But my soul was not satisfied with what I met with, nor indeed could be, there being further quickenings and pressings in my spirit, after a more full, certain, and satisfactory knowledge; even after the sense, sight, and enjoyment of God, as was testified in the Scriptures to have been felt and enjoyed in the former times: for I saw plainly that there was a stop of the streams, and a great falling short of the power, life, and glory which they partook of. We had not so the Spirit, nor were so in the faith, nor did so walk and live in God, as they did. They were come to Mount Sion, and the heavenly Jerusalem, &c., which we had hardly so much as the literal knowledge or apprehension what they were. So that I saw the whole course of religion among us was, for the most part, but a talk, to what they felt, enjoyed, possessed, and lived in.

"This sense made me sick at heart indeed, and set me upon deep crying to God, close searching the Scriptures, and waiting on God, that I might receive the pure sense and understanding of them, from and in the light, and by the help of his Spirit. And what the Lord did bestow on me in that state, with thankfulness I remember before him at this very day: for he was then my God, and a pitier and a watcher over me; though he had not pleased then to direct me how to stay my mind upon him. And then I was led (indeed I was led, I did not run of myself) into a way of separation from the worship of the world into a gathered society: for this both the scripture and the Spirit of God in me gave testimony unto; and what we then met with, and what leadings and help we then felt, there is a remembrance and testimony in my heart to this day. But there was somewhat wanting, and we mistook our way; for whereas we should have pressed forward into the spirit and power, we ran too much outward into the letter and form: and though the Lord in many things helped us, yet therein he was against us, and brought darkness, confusion, and scattering upon us. I was sorely broken and darkened, and in this darkened state sometimes lay still for a long season, secretly mourning and crying out to the Lord night and day.

Sometimes I ran about, hearkening after what might appear or break forth in others; but never met with any thing whereto there was the least answer in my heart, save in one people, who had a touch of truth; but I never expressed so much to any of them, nor indeed felt them at all able to reach my condition.

"At last, after all my distresses, wanderings, and sore travails, I met with some of the writings of this people called QUAKERS, which I cast a slight eye upon and disdained, as falling very short of that wisdom, light, life, and power, which I had been longing for, and searching after. I had likewise, some pretty distance of time after this, opportunity of meeting with some of them; and divers of them were by the Lord moved (I know it to be so since) to come to me. As I remember, at the very first they reached to the life of God in me, which life answered their voice, and caused a great love in me to spring to them; but still in my reasonings with them, and disputes alone (in my mind) concerning them, I was very far off from owning them, as so knowing the Lord, or so appearing in his life and power as my condition needed, and as my soul waited for. Yea, the more I conversed with them, the more I seemed in my understanding and reason to get over them, and to trample them under my feet, as a poor, weak, silly, contemptible generation, who had some smatterings of truth in them, and some honest desires towards God; but very far off from the clear and full understanding of his way and will. And this was the effect almost of every discourse with them; they still reached my heart, and I felt them in the secrets of my soul; which caused the love in me always to continue, yea, sometimes to increase towards them: but daily my understanding got more and more over them, and therein I daily more and more despised them.

"After a long time I was invited to hear one of them (as I had been often, they in tender love pitying me, and feeling my want of that which they possessed); and there was an answer in my heart, and I went with fear and trembling, with desires to the Most High, who was over all, and knew

all, that I might not receive any thing for truth which was not of him, nor withstand any thing which was of him; but might bow before the appearance of the Lord my God, and none other. And indeed, when I came, I felt the presence and power of the Most High among them, and words of truth from the Spirit of truth reaching to my heart and conscience, opening my state as in the presence of the Lord. Yea, I did not only feel words and demonstrations from without, but I felt the dead quickened, the seed raised; insomuch that my heart (in the certainty of light, and clearness of true sense) said, *This is he, this is he, there is no other: this is he whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood; who was always near me, and had often begotten life in my heart; but I knew him not distinctly, nor how to receive him, or dwell with him.* And then in this sense (in the melting and breakings of my spirit) was I given up to the Lord, to become his, both in waiting for the further revealing of his seed in me, and to serve him in the life and power of his seed.

"Now what I met with after this, in my travails, in my waitings, in my spiritual exercises, is not to be uttered: only in general I may say this, I met with the very strength of hell. The cruel oppressor roared upon me, and made me feel the bitterness of his captivity, while he had any power: yea, the Lord was far from my help, and from the voice of my roaring. I also met with deep subtleties and devices to entangle me in that wisdom, which seemeth able to make wise in the things of God, but indeed is foolishness, and a snare to the soul, bringing it back into captivity, where the enemy's gins prevail. And what I met with outwardly from my own dear father, from my kindred, from my servants, from the people and powers of the world, for no other cause but fearing my God, worshipping him as he hath required of me, and bowing to his seed, which is his Son, who is to be worshipped by men and angels for evermore, the Lord my God knoweth, before whom my heart and ways are; who preserved me in love to them, in the midst of all I

suffered from them, and doth still so preserve me; blessed be his pure and holy name.

"But some may desire to know what I have at last met with? I answer, *I have met with the Seed.* Understand that word, and thou wilt be satisfied, and inquire no further. I have met with my God; I have met with my Saviour; and he hath not been present with me without his salvation; but I have felt the healings drop upon my soul from under his wings. I have met with the true knowledge, the knowledge of life, the living knowledge, the knowledge which is life; and this hath had the true virtue in it, which my soul hath rejoiced in, in the presence of the Lord. I have met with the Seed's Father, and in the Seed I have felt him my Father. There I have read his nature, his love, his compassions, his tenderness, which have melted, overcome, and changed my heart before him. I have met with the Seed's faith, which hath done and doth that which the faith of man can never do. I have met with the true birth, with the birth which is heir of the kingdom, and inherits the kingdom. I have met with the true spirit of prayer and supplication, wherein the Lord is prevailed with, and which draws from him whatever the condition needs; the soul always looking up to him in the will, and in the time and way, which are acceptable with him. What shall I say? I have met with the true peace, the true righteousness, the true holiness, the true rest of the soul, the everlasting habitation, which the redeemed dwell in: and I know all these to be true, in him that is true, and am capable of no doubt, dispute, or reasoning in my mind about them; it abiding there, where it hath received the full assurance and satisfaction. And also I know very well and distinctly in spirit where the doubts and disputes are, and where the certainty and full assurance are, and in the tender mercy of the Lord am preserved out of the one, and in the other.

"Now, the Lord knows, these things I do not utter in a boasting way; but would rather be speaking of my nothingness, my emptiness, my weakness, my manifold infirmities, which I feel more than ever. The Lord hath broken the

man's part in me, and I am a worm, and no man before him. I have no strength to do any good or service for him: nay, I cannot watch over or preserve myself. I feel daily that I keep not alive my own soul; but am weaker before men, yea, weaker in my spirit, as in myself, than ever I have been. But I can not but utter to the praise of my God, and I feel his arm stretched out for me; and my weakness which I feel in myself, is not my loss, but advantage before him.—And these things I write, as having no end at all therein of my own, but felt it this morning required of me; and so in submission and subjection to my God have I given up to do it, leaving the success and service of it with him."

Aylesbury, 15th of 3d month, 1667. I. P.

Neither to him was it given only to believe, but to suffer also for the sake of Christ. His imprisonments were many, and some of them long, which with great constancy and quietness of mind he underwent. But because so general an account may perhaps not answer the expectation and desire of the reader, I will here subjoin a more particular; but that as contracted and short as may be.

His first imprisonment was at Aylesbury gaol, in the years 1661 and 1662, being committed thither for worshipping God in his own house; where, for seventeen weeks, great part of it in winter, he was kept in a cold and very incommodious room, without a chimney; from which hard usage his tender body contracted so great and violent a distemper, that for several weeks after, he was not able to turn himself in his bed.

His second imprisonment was in the year 1664, being taken out of a meeting, where he with others was peaceably waiting upon the Lord, and sent to Aylesbury gaol, where he again remained a prisoner between seventeen and eighteen weeks.

His third imprisonment was in the year 1665, being taken up, with many others, in the open street of Amersham, as they were carrying and accompanying the body of a deceased

friend to the grave. From hence he was sent again to Aylesbury gaol; but this commitment being in order to banishment, was but for a month, or thereabouts.

His fourth imprisonment was in the same year, 1665, about a month after his releasement from the former.—Hitherto his commitment had been by the civil magistrates; but now, that he might experience the severity of each, he fell into the military hands. A rude soldier, without any other warrant than what he carried in his scabbard, came to his house, and told him he came to fetch him before Sir Philip Palmer, one of the deputy-lieutenants of the county. He meekly went, and was by him sent with a guard of soldiers to Aylesbury goal, with a kind of mittimus, importing, "That the gaoler should receive and keep him in safe custody during the pleasure of the earl of Bridgewater;" who had, it seems, conceived so great, as well as unjust, displeasure against this innocent man, that, although (it being the sickness year) the plague was suspected to be in the gaol, he would not be prevailed with, by the earnest importunity of a person both of considerable quality and power in the county, only to permit Isaac Penington to be removed to another house in the town, and there kept prisoner until the gaol were clear. Afterwards a prisoner dying in the gaol of the plague, the gaoler's wife, her husband being absent, gave leave to Isaac Penington to remove to another house, where he was shut up about six weeks: after which, by the procurement of the earl of Aneram, a release was sent from the said Philip Palmer, by which he was discharged, after he had suffered imprisonment three quarters of a year, with apparent hazard of his life, and that for no offence.

By the time he had been at home about three weeks, a party of soldiers from the said Philip Palmer (by order of the earl of Bridgewater, as was reported) came to his house, and seizing him in bed, carried him away to Aylesbury gaol again; where, without any cause showed, or crime objected, he was kept in prison a year and a half, in rooms so cold, damp, and unhealthy, that it went very near to cost him his life, and procured him so great a distemper, that he lay weak

of it several months. At length a relation of his wife's, by an habeas corpus, removed him to the King's-Bench bar, where (with the wonder of the court that a man should be so long imprisoned for nothing) he was at last released in the year 1668. This was his fifth imprisonment.

His sixth imprisonment was in the year 1670, in Reading gaol, whither he went to visit his friends that were sufferers there for the testimony of Jesus. Of which, notice being given to one called Sir William Armorer, a justice of the peace for that county, and living in the town, he was forthwith sent for before him, and committed to the gaol, thereby becoming a fellow-sufferer with them, whom, being sufferers for the truth, he came to visit. Here he continued a prisoner a year and three quarters, and was brought under the sentence of premunire; but at length the Lord delivered him.

Thus through many tribulations did he enter into the kingdom; having been exercised, tried, proved, and approved by the Lord. Long was he in the warfare, and, like a good soldier, manfully endured the fight of afflictions: but having fought the good fight, and kept the faith, he hath now, in the Lord's good time, finished his course, and is gone to possess the crown of righteousness laid up for him, and all those that love the bright appearance of the Lord.—A faithful laborer he was in the Lord's vineyard for many years; but now hath he ceased from his labor, and his works follow him. He walked with God, and is translated. To the Lord he lived, and in the Lord he died, and by the Spirit of the Lord he is pronounced blessed: blessed for ever be the name of the Lord therefore.

The TESTIMONY *of* ALEXANDER PARKER, *concerning* ISAAC PENINGTON.

HAVING seen and read many lively and fresh testimonies of several of my dear brethren, concerning our dear friend and brother Isaac Penington, deceased, I did satisfy myself with what was written by them, being so full and large, and

answering my own sense, that I did acquiesce in my own mind, not intending to appear in public in this matter; but of late hearing a testimony read, written by his dear wife M. P., it did so revive the remembrance of him, that the sense of that love and endeared affection which I always had for him, did so work in my mind, that I could not be clear without casting in my mite amongst the rest of my brethren, having known him from the early days of his convincement of the blessed truth, in which he lived, and for which he suffered; and *in the faith of which holy truth he finished his course.*

The first time that I saw his face was at Reading in Berkshire, in the twelfth month, called February, 1656. And though at that time he had not the outward garb and appearance of a QUAKER, yet did mine eye behold an inward beauty and hidden virtue of life in him; and my soul, in the bowels of the love of the truth, did cleave unto him, and I could have embraced him in the sense thereof; but in those early days we were cautious, and laid hands on no man suddenly. He did not hastily join in society with us; but for some time did reason about many things. Though he owned the principal doctrines of truth, yet the instruments that declared it, and their way and manner, seemed very contemptible to him, until he heard that faithful servant of God G. F. (who was the first man that proclaimed the gospel of life and salvation amongst us), at a meeting at J. Crook's, in Bedfordshire, at the time called Whitsuntide, in the year 1658; at which meeting the mystery of iniquity was so opened, and the mystery of the gospel of peace so plainly manifested, that he was fully satisfied; and from that time he gave up himself to the obedience of truth, and took up the cross, and became a disciple and follower of Christ, and suffered with us for the name and testimony of Jesus, and bore the scoffings and reproaches of the ungodly with much patience, accounting it his riches: and in much love did he embrace and receive the messengers and servants of God into his house; where were many precious meetings, and many were convinced and brought into the way of life, amongst whom he was a good pattern, and an help unto

them; and when they were bowed down in spirit, and afflicted in mind, he was a great help and comfort to such, having himself travelled through various and deep exercises, through which the Lord brought him, and established him in righteousness. *He was a man of a quick apprehension; and when any spark did arise from the coals of God's altar, it quickly kindled in him a flame of holy zeal for God and his truth; even in the morning of his convincement, and in the fresh openings of life, many living testimonies were given forth by him,* as in his writings may be seen, to which the reader is referred. His heart and soul were much drawn forth unto the professors of religion of all persuasions, having a deep travail for them; and in much bowels of love and tender compassion did he entreat and beseech them to turn to the true light, that they might be converted and healed. But few did regard his deep travails for them; which doubtless will rise in judgment as a testimony against them. And I do desire, that those whose day is not over may yet consider, and take a further view into his writings, and search into their own hearts, that, with the light of Jesus that shines there, they may come to a true sight of their sins, and so to a godly sorrow, which may work repentance unto life, that they may find mercy with the Lord, and peace to their immortal souls. In all his writings and declarations he still pointed to life, and pressed all to mind the power of godliness, and not to settle or content themselves in the letter or form of religion. This, oh! this, was the very bent of his mind; and the strong cries of his soul to the Lord were, that all might partake of life, even the life of Jesus, in their mortal bodies, which he, through the death of the cross, was made a partaker of; in which life he lived unto God, and was a lively pattern of humility, walking uprightly, in innocency before the Lord. He was a man weaned from the world, and redeemed from the earth, his mind being daily exercised in things of a higher nature, drinking daily of the water that Christ gives; which was in him "a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life," which filled his vessel, and caused his cup to overflow. Much might be said of this good man; but words

are too short to signify the depth of his inward life. I write not these things to exalt or set up man: but to exalt and magnify the grace of God, which was in him: which was sufficient for him; by the power of which he was carried on through all his troubles and exercises: by which he was taught to deny ungodliness, and all the evil lusts of this wicked world; and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this world; in which godly life he persisted to the end of his days. And as he lived in the Lord, even so he died, laying down his head in peace, and liveth with the Lord in the enjoyment of his love, where there is "joy and felicity for ever," and his memory is sweet and blessed. Oh that every one that professeth the holy truth "may so run, that they may obtain the crown of eternal life!" This is the travail and the earnest desire of him who seeketh the good of all mankind.

ALEXANDER PARKER.

London, the 5th of the 2nd month, 1681.

The Testimony of JOHN PENINGTON, *to his dear and deceased father* ISAAC PENINGTON.

GIVE me leave also, in a few words, to express my sense of him (seeing I have been no small sharer in the loss), a man that had known the depths of Satan, and had a stock to lose before he could embrace truth in the simplicity of it; yet came forth in clearness: which is the more remarkable, inasmuch as few came near him in those bright openings and piercing wisdom he was endued with in those days; whereby he struck at all false foundations and professions, and saw their shortness, and the very thing they wanted.—So that when I have taken a view of his former writings, and beheld the glory he once had, and withal reflected on his [illegible] [illegible]olution, on his poverty, on his nothingness, on [illegible] and self abasement: how little he esteemed

all his former knowledge, and sights of the heavenly things themselves, in comparison of the more excellent knowledge he afterwards received, and how he could be a fool for Christ's sake; the thing hath affected me, and not a little, many times. Oh! he was not one that could deck himself, or desired to appear before men, or his very brethren; but ever chose to be more to the Lord than to men. And when any have been deeply reached through his tender, yet searching lively testimony, oh, how great was his care that none might look out too much at the instrument, or receive truth in the affectionate part! He was also a meek man, and very loving; courteous to all; ready to serve his very enemies and persecutors; of whom some, from an ill opinion of him, were gained to love and esteem him. And wherever he entered into a friendship with any, he was constant. Whatever provocations he might afterwards receive from any of them, he could not let go his hold; but ever retained a good-will towards them, and an earnest desire for their welfare. I have also observed, where he hath been engaged on truth's behalf to rebuke any sharply, who were declining from their first love, and deviating from the truth, as it is in Jesus, it hath been with so much reluctancy and averseness to his natural temper, as I never discerned the like in any; and herein I am not alone. So that it may be safely said he never used the rod, but with bowels to reclaim; and in the love was drawn to smite what the purest love could not suffer to go unrebuked. What he was in the church of God for exemplariness, for deep travail, for sound judgment, and heavenly ministry, I know not a few are very sensible of. And have not I seen his cup many times overflow, and him so filled, that the vessel was scarce able to contain! Oh, it was delightful to me to be with him (as it was often my lot) in his service on truth's account! And my cry is, that I may walk worthy of so dear a parent, so unwearied and earnest a traveller for mine and other's eternal well-being, and so faithful and eminent a laborer in God's vineyard; who is now gone to his rest in a good day, having first seen the effects of the travail of his soul, and

been satisfied in the Lord. But he hath left us, his children, behind, for whom he hath often prayed, and besought the Lord with tears, *that we might walk in his steps, and our father's God might be our God, and that the blessings of our father's life might descend upon us.* And we are still, after much weakness, upon the stage of this world; which, that it may be so rightly improved, that we may walk worthy of the manifold visitations we have had from him in particular, and many faithful laborers in general, is the incessant desire of (him that hopes, with thankfulness to the Lord, to reverence his memory, as well as that he honors him in the relation of a dear and tender father).

The 9th of the 3rd month, 1681. JOHN PENINGTON.

P. S. It pleased the Lord to remove him from us, and take him to himself, on the eighth day of the eighth month, 1679, between three and four in the morning, at one of my dear mother's farms in Kent, in the parish of Goodnestone, called Goodnestone-Court. They had been among their tenants in that country, and in their return home spent some time here; but the day appointed for my dear father to return, he was visited with this sickness, whereof he died, having lain just a week. His body was conveyed thence (some of his relations and London friends accompanying it) to London, thence into Buckinghamshire to his own house, and so to the burying-place of friends belonging to Chalfont-meeting (called Jordan's); where he was honorably buried, being accompanied by some hundreds of friends and neighbors.

THE WAY

OF

LIFE AND DEATH

MADE MANIFEST,

AND

SET BEFORE MEN;

Whereby the many Paths of DEATH *are impleaded, and the one Path of* LIFE *propounded, and pleaded for; in some* POSITIONS *concerning the Apostasy from the* CHRISTIAN SPIRIT *and* LIFE; *with some* PRINCIPLES *guiding out of it; and also an* ANSWER *to some Objections, whereby the simplicity in some may be entangled; held forth in tender Good-will, both to* PAPISTS *and* PROTESTANTS, *who have generally erred from the Faith for these many Generations, since the days of the* APOSTLES; *and with that which they have erred from are they comprehended.*

By ISAAC PENINGTON, *the Younger.*

THE PREFACE.

MY soul hath still in remembrance the grievous shakings and rendings that have been in this nation, which entered deep into the bowels of it, and made every heart ache, and every mind astonished. This nation was settled in religion and outward peace, in such a way as was pleasing to most; but yet there was a spirit within, which had been long groaning under oppression, whose sighs and cries entered into the ears of the Lord: and he rose up in his fury and jealousy, and rent the heavens, and rent the earth; so breaking the very foundation of both, that men generally were amazed,

and wondered what would become of all. The former religion was almost buried in confusion, and in danger of being utterly lost. A long-spun, corroding war were we entangled in, which administered no hopes nor likelihood of peace.—The hand of the Lord reached through all these dominions; magistracy, ministry, the common people, the people of God (both such as were accounted so, and such as were indeed so), the line of confusion was stretched over them all; they did all reel and totter like a drunken man, as if they had been so to fall as to rise up no more.

But behold how suddenly and unexpectedly was there a settlement of all again! the nation settled in peace, magistracy settled, ministry settled, the common people settled, and those which were shaken in their spirits got into their several ways in religion, and settled again. Thus there was a general healing of all again, save only of a few, whose spirits God had so reached, that their wound was incurable; and unless somewhat of God had been brought forth, which the world cannot know (nay, the religious spirit of man, which is below, can no more reach it than the common spirit of the world), they had remained miserable, lost, scattered, and confounded to this day. But the Lord hath in infinite mercy visited them in the season of distress: and there hath a little foolish thing broke forth (at which all the wise and religious in the spirit of this world cannot but stumble), which hath administered relief, and discovered the foundation whereon they also can settle. So that now there is, as it were, a universal settlement, as every creature is gathered into the centre which is proper and suitable to its spirit to bottom on.

Now this I have to say to all; Let every one look to his foundation; for the Lord can arise again; yea, and will arise again, and shake once more; and then the heavens and the earth, which have not a true foundation, cannot but fall. If the earth be not founded upon and settled in righteousness, its present establishment will not stand. If the heavens be not founded upon and settled in truth, they will melt and pass away before the fire of the Lord. There is a spirit that

mourneth deeply to the Lord, groaning inwardly, and his ears are open to it, and he will plead the cause of his seed; and the churches and religions wherein the seed of the serpent can live and flourish, shall wither and come to an end. Dust is already become the serpent's food. The spirit of man, in all his exercises of religion, knoweth not the bread of life; but the dead feed upon the dead, and the dead spirit of man loves to have it so. But this cannot continue; for the Lord hath been at work all this while; and when he brings forth the people which he hath been forming, and their religion, the religion of man will appear what it is; and shame and sorrow will be the portion of all who have pleased themselves therein, and trifled away the day of their visitation.

Be wise now, therefore, O ye wise ones! be religious, O ye religious ones! open the eye and ear that have been shut; shut the eye and ear that have been open: stumble no longer, lest ye fall and rise no more. I know ye cannot see; for the wrong eye is open, and the Lord hath designed to hide his wisdom from that eye. If it be possible for you, become poor in spirit; lest ye at last prove to be the rich whom the Lord will send empty away. Sell all apace, that ye may have wherewith to buy the pearl. Ye have not known the appearance of the Lord; but in your wisdom have disdained it, and he hath disdained to make use of you in this great work; but it hath been pleasant to him to lay stumbling-blocks before you, that ye might fall and be broken. The children, the fools, the blind, can see the way, and enter into life; but ye that are men, that are wise, that have both your eyes, that can judge in religion, and determine what is orthodox, and what erroneous, ye cannot.

Oh hear, that your souls may live! Ye know not how short your time is; the day of your visitation passeth away faster than you are aware. The cry hath long gone forth, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, and his spouse hath been preparing for his bed! Ye must off with your old garments, and have the new on. Ye must have the true oil in your lamps, or the door of the kingdom will be shut upon you,

and there will be no entrance for you. In plain terms, you must part with all your religion which you have gathered in your own wisdom, which hath grown up in the apostasy, and which only can make a fair show in the dark; but can not endure the searching light of the day of the Lord; and ye must purchase the true religion, the true righteousness, the true innocency and purity of Christ. The old must be done away, truly done away, and the new come in the place. So that flesh and self may be quite destroyed, and nothing but Christ found in you, and you found no where but in Christ, if you enter into his kingdom; for no unclean thing can enter. Therefore put away pride and passion and enmity and fleshly reasonings, and seek out that which is pure, and enter into it, and take up the cross against all that is contrary, that so you may be wrought into it, and found in it. And turn from all imaginings and conceivings about the meanings of scriptures in the uncertain and erring mind, and come to that which is infallible. And know the silencing of the fleshly part, that the spiritual part may grow in the wisdom, that so ye may learn in the spirit, and know the word of God, and be able to speak it.

My bowels are towards you, and in bowels hath this been written, not to anger or shame you, but to provoke you to jealousy against that dark and evil spirit, which leads you to destruction under the guise and appearance of a light and good spirit. Nor is it to glory over you; for my soul lieth down in shame and sorrow before the Lord, and the reproach of mine own apostasy, and seeking relief from the world (turning from the Lord, who had wounded me, to earthly vanities for ease), will not easily be recovered.

The Lord hath been kind to me in breaking of me in my religion, and in visiting me with sweet and precious light from his own spirit; but I knew it not. I felt, and could not but acknowledge, a power upon me, and might have known what it was by its purifying of my heart, and begetting me into the image of God; but I confined it to appear in a way of demonstration to my reason and earthly wisdom, and for want of satisfaction therein, denied and rebelled

against it; and so, after all my former misery, lost my entrance, and sowed seeds of new misery and sorrow to my own soul, which since I have reaped. So that I have no cause to boast over others; but to lie low in abasement of spirit. And what I write is not in any dominion and authority of mine own; but to bring others into that dominion and authority which it is good for me, and for every one else, to be subject to. The Lord strip us of our own understanding, and of that righteousness which is but ours (though we have called it his), that so we may be gathered into, and receive his understanding, and be clothed with his righteousness, and feel his rest and peace! And happy is he that loseth all to gain this; but he that keepeth what he hath too long, shall in the end lose all, and yet not gain this either; therefore be no longer wise in the eye of flesh, or according to what man calleth wisdom; but be TRULY wise.

SOME POSITIONS

CONCERNING THE APOSTASY FROM THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT AND LIFE.

POSITION I.

That there hath been a great apostasy from the Spirit of Christ, and from the true light and life of Christianity: which apostasy began in the apostles' days, and ripened apace afterwards.

THAT the apostles and Christians in their days had the true spirit, the true light, the true life, I think will not be denied. "We know that we are of God, and that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal

life." 1 John v. 19, 20. They were truly born of God, and knew the Son of God come, receiving from him a true understanding, and the true light and knowledge in that understanding; and both the understanding and knowledge were rooted and seated in him that is true, where their situation and abiding were "(we are in him that is true)," where they met with the true Spirit, the true God, the true life, even life eternal. That they had the true Spirit from God, "(because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." Gal. iv, 6.) that they had the true light from God, "(God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts," &c. 2 Cor. iv. 6.) that they had the true life from and in the spirit, "(if we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit." Gal. v. 25.) is generally acknowledged concerning them.

Now of an apostasy from this, beginning even in their days, and to be completed not long after, the Scriptures also make mention. The Apostle Paul speaks expressly of the thing, that there must come "a falling away," and a revealing of "the man of sin, the son of perdition." 2 Thess. ii. 3. Christ, the man of salvation, had showed and declared the path of life; had discovered the true church, which was "the pillar and ground of truth," against which the gates of hell could not prevail; had sent the true spirit, which could "lead into all truth," and preserve in the truth: but there must spring up a "man of sin, a son of perdition," who, in a mystery, should work against this, and cause a falling from this to another thing. And this the apostle did not only give a touch of here in writing, but he had likewise told them of these things by word of mouth, to which he refers them, verse 5. This were enough to an eye opened; but for further illustration to the thick understanding of man, which is surrounded with fogs and mists of darkness, some more evidences of scriptures may be given.

Christ foretold of false prophets, Mat. vii. 15. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." The Lord sent true prophets under the law, and gave them true visions to de-

clare: Christ sent true apostles and ministers under the gospel, and gave them the truth which they should preach and propagate: but then there were false prophets, false apostles, and ministers to come after, who were never sent by Christ, nor ever received the truth from his spirit. Now these do not come to gather into the life and truth of Christ, but to scatter from it; and so either to begin or uphold an apostasy. And, saith Christ, beware of them; for they come very subtilly; they come in sheep's clothing: they get the garment of the sheep upon their backs, even that very garment which the sheep did wear; but they have not the nature of the sheep, but the nature of the wolf, which is ravenous after the life of the sheep. Mark: where there is the garment without, but not the nature within; where there is the form of godliness, but not the power; where there are scripture words and practices, but not the spirit of life from which they came; there is the false prophet! there is the wolf! there is the apostate! there is the seducer from Christ!

Again, Christ foretells of many false prophets, Mat. xxiv. 11. "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." And verse 24, "For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

And as Christ himself, so his apostles also after him, by the same spirit, foretell of the same thing.

The Apostle Paul speaks of seducing spirits in the latter times, and of doctrines of devils, which should prevail to cause a departure in some from the faith. 1 Tim. iv. 2.—And if, in those days, the power of seducers was so great as to draw from the truth, which was then so manifest and living, how easy it would be to keep from the truth afterwards, when it had been long lost, and out of remembrance, and thereby deceit got into the place and name of it.

The Apostle Peter also foretold of "false teachers," who should "privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them:" and that they should so prevail, that their "pernicious ways" should be followed by

many, and "the way of truth evil spoken of." 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

Again, Paul, in his 2nd Epistle to Timothy, speaks of the last days, that the times therein should be "perilous;" chap. iii. Christ had said, "The love of many should wax cold, and iniquity abound." Mat. xxiv. 12. And Paul shows how the times would prove very perilous, by the abounding of iniquity. "In the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Behold what kind of fruit sprung up from the false doctrine of the false teachers in the apostasy from the truth. And yet all this under a form of godliness; "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." verse 5. Christ sent the power of godliness into the world, to subdue the root from whence all this springs; to kill the evil nature inwardly: but in the apostasy the evil nature is not killed, but the power denied which should kill it, and the form kept up to cover the evil nature with: the inwardly ravening nature, which devours and destroys the stirrings and shootings-forth of the just-one in the heart, that gets the sheep's clothing, the form of godliness, to cover itself with. Look anywhere among the apostates from the apostles' spirit and doctrine, and see; Is self-love killed? is covetousness killed? are boasting and pride killed? is the love of pleasures killed? are persecutors and oppressors killed? and are your honor and glory laid in the dust? Nay: they are but covered with the form; their life is still in them; the power wherewith they should be killed was at first denied, and now is lost and not known. Where there is the life, there is the power; and where there is the power, the evil nature is killed. But where the evil nature is not killed, there is only a form of godliness, a covering, a painted sepulchre, but rottenness within.

Now those last days and last times were not far off, but began then: for the apostle exhorts Timothy to turn away

from such, verse 5. "From such turn away:" intimating, that even then there were such to be turned away from.—And he saith, verse 8. that they did then resist the truth, like Jannes and Jambres; who with a likeness of what *Moses* wrought, but without life, did strive to resist the life and power that was in Moses. And this is the work of all deceivers, to get their own spirit into the likeness, and then to make use of the likeness to oppose and suppress the true life and power. So that they were come even then, when the apostle wrote this epistle to Timothy.

And Jude saith, that "ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," were "crept in" already. verse 4. of his epistle.

And the Apostle John speaks very expressly, 1 John ii. 18, 19. "Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us," &c. Christ, instructing his disciples concerning the last times, tells them there shall arise false Christs, with great power of deceit. Mat. xxiv. 24. Now, saith John here, there are come "many antichrists, whereby we know it is the last time." Mark: there were many antichrists to begin and lay the foundation of the apostasy, and make way for the great antichrist, who was to be their successor in the apostasy, and not the successor of the apostles in the truth: and these did not abide in the doctrines of the apostles, who preached "the everlasting gospel," nor in the spirit and principle which they were in; but "went out" from them, from their spirit (from the anointing to which they kept, and by which they were kept) into another spirit, and preached another gospel; a gospel which was not the power of God to kill the earthly, but consisted in such a dead, literal knowledge of things as the earthly might be fed and kept alive by. And as the great antichrist was to come, so these antichrists who were to make way for him were already come, and were already laying the foundation of, and beginning the apostasy. So that the spirit of antichrist

(that very spirit wherein antichrist succeeded, and in which he grew up, and perfected the apostasy) was then in the world, as this apostle saith yet more manifestly, 1 John, iv. 3. "This is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."

Nor was it idle, but it was at work, working itself into the form of godliness, that it might eat out the power, drive out the true spirit, and make a prey of the life. "The mystery of iniquity," saith the Apostle Paul, "doth already work." 2 Thess. ii. 7. This spirit did work in a mystery of iniquity to eat out the mystery of godliness, and to set up this mystery of iniquity in the world, instead of the mystery of godliness. And it did prevail to wind itself in the form, and get possession of the form, and also to trample upon and keep under the life. It gained the "outward court" (for when that spirit had corrupted it, the Lord did not regard it, but gave it up to it), and it trod down the "holy city." Rev. xi. 2. And this mystery of iniquity did not begin to work many ages after the apostles; but even then, in their days, *already:* "the mystery of iniquity doth already work."

And look now into the estate of the churches then, according to what the Scripture records of them, and the symptoms of its working will plainly appear. The church of Ephesus (among whom some of the grievous wolves had entered, Acts, xx. 29.) had left their first love. Rev. ii. 4. The churches of Galatia were bewitched from the gospel. Gal. iii. 1. The church at Coloss was entangled, and made subject to the rudiments of the world, and ordinances (which perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men. Col. ii. 20, 22. Mark: when once one comes to be subject to the commandments and doctrines of men, to perishing ordinances, and worldly rudiments, which men teach and command, the true state is lost, and the apostasy is entered into. Here the wrong teacher is teaching, and he teacheth the wrong thing, the wrong doctrines, the wrong commandments; and the wrong ear is hearing, which hears the wrong voice, and knoweth not the true; and so the more it heareth and practiseth, and the hotter its zeal groweth, the deeper it

still runs into the apostasy. The church at Corinth also was haunted with false apostles, 2 Cor. xi. 12, 13. insomuch that the apostle was afraid lest that church should be corrupted by them. verse 3. The church in Pergamus had them that held the doctrine of Balaam. Rev. ii. 14. The church in Thyatira suffered the woman Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess, to seduce and bring forth children in the apostasy. Rev. ii. 20, 23. The church in Sardis had a name to live, but was dead; Rev. iii. 1. having defiled her garments. verse 4. The church in Laodicea looked upon herself as rich, and increased with goods, and as having need of nothing; but was wretched, miserable, poor, blind (so then the eye was put out), and naked, wanting the gold, wanting the raiment, wanting the eye-salve. Rev. iii. 17, 18. And lastly, all the Gentiles were warned by Paul, in his epistle to the church at Rome (whereby that church might look upon herself as more particularly concerned therein), to look to their standing; lest they, falling from the faith, from the truth, from the life, into the apostasy (as the Jews had done), might also feel the severity of God, as the Jews had. chap. xi. 20, 21, 22.

Thus it is evident that the apostasy had got footing, and begun to spread in the apostles' days: and the Apostle John, in the spirit, beholding the future state of things, sees it over-spread and over-run all: "all nations drunk with the cup of fornication." Rev. xviii. 3. The way of truth had been evil spoken of long before, 2 Pet. ii. 2 and the Rock of Ages, which alone can establish in the truth, had been forsaken, and all became as a *sea;* and up gets the *beast* (which could not rise while the power of truth stood), and the *woman* upon the beast, with the cup of deceit and error from the life, in her hand; and this she gives all the nations to drink, and they drink, and are drunk with it. So that all nations have been intoxicated with the doctrines and practices of the apostasy. They have taken that for truth which the whore told them was truth, and they have observed those things as the commands of God which the whore told them were the commands of God. And by this means they

have never come to be married to Christ, to be in union with him, to receive the law of life from his spirit, and to know the liberty from the bondage of corruption; but have been in the bed of fornication with the whore, and have pleased, glutted, and satisfied the whorish principle in themselves with this fornication. And thus corruption did overspread all the earth; for taking in a corrupt thing instead of the truth, it cannot purify the heart, but corrupt it more. A corrupt profession, corrupt doctrines, may paint, and make a man to himself seem changed; but the corruption still lodges within, which a spiritual eye can easily discern, though he that is in the corruption cannot. The Pharisees seemed glorious to themselves; but Christ saw through them. And every sort of people now, in their several strains and forms of apostasy, seem glorious to themselves; but the spirit of Christ sees through them all, to that which lies underneath (in whom it reigns), and there it finds corruption increased and strengthened in its nature by the form, though outwardly painted with it. Doth not fornication defile and corrupt? so doth the fornication of the whorish spirit: "the earth was corrupted with it." Rev. xix. 2. So that this hath been the universal state of Christendom since the apostasy; the error, the deceit, the fornication of the whore, have corrupted them, and with-held their eyes from the sight of that life and truth which hath power in it to purify them. People, multitudes, nations, tongues, have been all waters: weak, unstable, without any foundation in religion, but fit to be swayed and tossed up and down with every wind or breath of the whore, of whose cup they had all drunk, and by whose spirit they were all guided; for "the whore sat upon them." Rev. xvii. 15. The whore, which had whored from God, and so was not the true church, "sat upon people, multitudes, nations, and tongues." She sat upon them; she had them under her; she ruled and guided them by her cup of fornication, and with her spirit of fornication, as a man would guide the beast whereupon he rides. So that all that the nations do from henceforth in religion, is under the whore,

according to her guidance, by virtue of the wine that they have drunk out of her cup.

And though God reserved to himself a remnant to worship him, and give some testimony to his truth all this time; yet the "beast" (which was managed by the whore) had power over them: power to make war with them; power to overcome them. Rev. xiii. 7. The "beast" had power over all "kindreds, tongues, and nations" everywhere; to overcome the "saints," and suppress the truth they at any time were moved to give testimony to; and to set up the worship of the "beast," and make all the earth fall down before that. Rev. xiii. 7, 8. And the second "beast" had, and exercised, all the power of the first "beast," and set up his image, and gave it life, and caused men generally to worship it. Rev. xiii. 12. "And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive his mark" some way or other, either in their right hand, or in their forehead. verse 16. And such as would not receive his mark, nor worship him, he had power to persecute and kill; and he did kill them. verse 15. And the whore drank their blood. chap. xvii. 6. And God required it at her hand. chap. xix. 2. Though she made the hand of the beast execute it, and would seem to wash her own hands of it.

So that now, since the days of the apostles, even all this time of the apostasy, since the man-child hath been caught up to God, and was not to be found in the earth (which makes it seem such a strange thing for people to say Christ is in them), and the woman hath been in the wilderness, and not in the habitable part of the world, Rev. xii. 5, 6. if all this time any one will look for the true religion, for the true church, for the true knowledge and worship of God, he must not look on any nation, or any people, or among the tongues, which are cried up in nations and people for the original, and as the chief interpreters of the original; for they are all drunk with the whore's cup: they are under the power, dominion, authority, and service of the "whore," who rides upon the "beast" to whom "power was given over all kindreds, tongues, and nations." But look among the nations

who were persecuted, whose blood was drunk, whom the powers of the nations made war against; there alone the testimony of Jesus is to be found. Rev. xii. 17. There alone are the witnesses against the present idolatry and corruption, and to some truths or other of Christ, which God enlightened them with, and whereto he stirred them up to give their testimony, though with the loss of their estates, liberties, or lives.

Now, by what hath been expressed, is it not manifest to every eye that hath room but to let in the letter of the scripture, in simplicity and plainness, that there hath been a great apostasy from the true knowledge of Christ, and a universal corruption and power of death sprung up, instead of the power of his life and grace? "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation," hath disappeared; and "the abomination of desolation" hath taken up its place, and filled it with deadly venom against the truth, and against the life: so that enmity against God, under a pretence of love and zeal to him, hath reigned generally in the hearts of men, from the times of the apostles to this present day. And as the light breaks forth, and their eyes come to be opened, they will see that they have been and are haters of God, and of his life and spirit; but lovers of the world, and of such a religion as suits the worldly spirit.

POSITION II.

That in this great apostasy, the true state of Christianity hath been lost.

This must needs be; for if there was an apostasy from the thing, there could not be a retaining of the thing about which the apostasy was. If they apostatized from the spirit, from the light, from the life; then they were gone from it—they lost it.

Now it may be instanced in every particular how the state of Christianity was lost: but that would be too vast and te-

dious: it may suffice, therefore, to instance in some considerable ones, which may lead into the discovery of the rest.

1. The true rule of Christianity, or the rule of a Christian, which is to direct, guide, and order him in his whole course, was apostatized from, and lost.

What is a Christian's rule, whereby he is to steer and order his course?

A Christian is to be a follower of Christ, and consequently must have the same rule to walk by as Christ had. A Christian proceeds from Christ, hath the same life in him, and needs the same rule. Christ had the fulness of life, and of his fulness we all receive a measure of the same life. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Ephes. v. 30. Yea, we came out of the same spring of life from whence he came: "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Heb. ii. 11. Now what was his rule? Was it not the fulness of life which he received? And what is their rule? Is it not the measure of life which they receive? Was not Christ's rule the law of the spirit; the law which the spirit wrote in his heart? And is not their rule the law of the spirit; the law which the spirit writes in their hearts? How was Christ made a king and a priest? Was it by the law of a carnal commandment? or by the power of an endless life? And how are they made kings and priests to God? Rev. i. 6. Is it by the law of a carnal commandment? or is it by the power of the same endless life? "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," saith Christ, "when he cometh into the world." Heb. x. 5, 7. But by what rule? By what law? "Thy law is within my heart." Psalm xl. 8. And the same spirit who wrote it there, is also to write the new covenant, with all the laws of it, in the heart of every Christian, from the least to the greatest. Heb. viii. 9, 10. Yea, the same spirit that dwelt in Christ's heart, is to dwell in their hearts, according to the promise of the covenant. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. This was

Paul's rule, after which he walked, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 1, 2. This made him "free from the law of sin and death." Where is the law of sin written? Where is the law of death written? Is it not written in the heart? And must not the law of righteousness and life be written there also, if it be able to deal with sin and death? The spirit forms the heart anew, forms Christ in the heart, begets a new creature there, which cannot sin "(He that is born of God sins not)." And this is the rule of righteousness, the new creature, or the spirit of life in the new creature. Gal. vi. 15, 16. "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature. And as many as "walk according to this rule, peace be on them." Mark: there is the rule; the new creature, which is begotten in every one that is born of God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" and this new creature is to be his rule. And as any man walks according to this rule, according to the new creature, according to the law of light and life that the spirit continually breathes into the new creature, he hath peace; but as he transgresses that, and walks not after the spirit, but after the flesh, he walks out of the light, out of the life, out of the peace, into the sea, into the death, into the trouble, into the condemnation. Here then is the law of the converted man, the new creature; and the law of the new creature is the spirit of life which begat him, which lives, and breathes, and gives forth his law continually in him. Here is a Christian; here is his rule: he that hath not the new creature formed in him, is no Christian; and he that hath the new creature, hath the rule in himself. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." 1 John ii. 20. How came they to know all things? Doth not John say, it was by the "unction?" The anointing was in them, a fountain or well-spring of light and life, issuing forth continually such rivers and streams of life within, as they needed no other teacher in the truth and way of life. verse 27. The "Comforter" did refresh their hearts sufficiently, and led them into all truth. Search the apostles' epistles, and ye shall find them testify-

ing of the Lord's sending his spirit into the hearts of Christians; and exhortations to them not to grieve or quench the spirit, but to follow as they were led. They were to "live in the spirit," and to "walk in the spirit." Gal. v. 25. And the spirit was to walk, and live, and bring forth his own life and power in them. 2 Cor. vi. 16. And what can be the proper and full rule of God's sons and daughters, but the light of the spirit of life, which they receive from their Father? Thus God did advance the state of a believer above the state of the Jews under the law: for they had the law, though written with the finger of God, yet but in tables of stone; but these have the law, written by the finger of God in the table of their hearts. Theirs was a law without, at a distance from them, and the priest's lips were to preserve the knowledge of it, and to instruct them in it; but here is a law within, nigh at hand, the immediate light of the spirit of life shining so immediately in the heart, that they need no man to teach them; but have the spirit of prophecy in themselves, and quick, living teachings from him continually, and are made such kings and priests to God, as the state of the law did but represent. The gospel is the substance of all the shadows contained in the law. A Christian is he that comes into this substance, and lives in this substance, and in whom this substance lives; and his rule is the substance itself, in which he lives, and which lives in him. Christ is the substance, who lives in the Christian, and he in Christ: Christ lives in him by his spirit, and he in Christ by the same spirit: there he lives, and hath fellowship with the Father and the Son, in the light wherein they live, and not by any outward rule. 1 John i. 6, 7.

But what is the rule now in the apostasy?

Among the Papists, the rule is the Scripture, interpreted by the church (as they call themselves), with a mixture of their own precepts and traditions.

Amongst the Protestants, the rule is the Scriptures, according as they can understand them by their own study, or according as they can receive the understanding of them from such men as they account orthodox. And hence arise

continual differences and heats and sects; one following this interpretation, another that.

And this is a grievous apostasy, and the root, spring, and foundation of all the rest; for he that misseth in his beginning, he that begins his religion without the true rule, how can he proceed aright in any thing afterwards?

Object. But are not the Scriptures the word of God?—And is not the word of God to be a Christian's rule? If every one should be left to his own spirit, what confusion and uncertainty would this produce!

Ans. The Scriptures are not that living Word, which is appointed by God to be the rule of a Christian; but they contain words spoken by the spirit of God, testifying of that Word, and pointing to that Word which is to be the rule. "Search the Scriptures, for in them you think to have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me; and ye will not come to me that ye may have life." John v. 39, 40. The Scriptures are to be searched for the testimony which they give of Christ; and when that testimony is received, Christ is to be come to, and life received from him. But the Pharisees formerly, and Christians since (I mean Christians in name) search the Scriptures; but do not come to Christ for the life, but stick in the letter of the Scriptures, and oppose the life with the letter, keeping themselves from the life by their wisdom and knowledge in the letter. Thus they put the Scriptures into the place of Christ, and so honor neither Christ nor the Scriptures. It had been no honor to John to have been taken for the Light; his honor was to point to it: nor is it any honor to the Scriptures to be called the Word of God; but their honor is to discover and testify of the Word. Now hear what the Scriptures call the Word; "In the beginning was the Word ,and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John i. 1. "And the Word was made flesh." verse 14. This was the name of Christ, when he came into the world in the flesh, to sow his life in the world. And when he comes again into the world, out of a far country, to fight with the beast and false prophet, and to cleanse the earth of the whore's fornication and idols,

wherewith she had corrupted it, he shall have the same name again; "his name is called the Word of God." Rev. xix. 13. So Peter calleth that the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 1 Pet. i. 23. And this Word that liveth and abideth for ever, was the Word that they preached. verse 25. And they that believed did not cry up the words that the apostles spake for the Word; but received the thing they spake of, "the ingrafted Word;" which being received with a meek, quiet, and submissive spirit, "is able to save the soul." Jam. i. 21. This is "the Word of faith" that is "nigh, in the heart and in the mouth." Rom. x. 8. This is the Word that stands at the door of the heart, and speaks to be let in "(Behold, I stand at the door and knock):" and when it is let in, it speaks in the heart what is to be heard and done. It is nigh; it is in the heart, and in the mouth; to what end? "That thou mightest hear it, and do it." The living Word, which is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," divides in the mouth, and divides in the heart, the vile from the precious; yea, it reacheth to the very inmost of the heart, and cuts between the roots, Heb. iv. 11. and this thou art to hear and do. Thou art to part with all vile words, the vile conversation, the vile course and worship of the world outwardly, and the vile thoughts and course of sin inwardly, as fast as the Word discovers them to thee, and to exercise thyself in that which is folly and madness to the eye of the world, and a grievous cross to thine own worldly nature; yea, when the Word reaches to the very nature, life, and spirit within, from whence all that comes, that strong, wise root of the fleshly life in the heart must not be spared, nor that foolish, weak thing (to man's wise eye) which is brought instead thereof, be rejected: which, when it is received, is but like a little seed, even the least of seeds; and when it grows up, it is a long while but like a child; and yet keeping in that childishness, out of the wisdom, it enters into that kingdom which the greatest wisdom of man (in all his zealous ways and forms of religion) falls short, and is shut out of. This is the word of life; this is the true, living rule,

and way to eternal life; and this is the obedience; this is the hearing and doing of the word. "He that hath an ear, let him hear. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith: prove your ownselves. Know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Are ye in the faith? Then Christ is in you. Is not Christ in you? Then ye are in the reprobate state, out of the faith. Is Christ in you, and shall he not hold the reins, and rule? Shall the living Word be in the heart, and not the rule of the heart? Shall he speak in the heart, and the man or woman in whom he speaks run to the words of scripture formerly spoken, to know whether these be his words or no? Nay, nay, his sheep know his voice better than so. Did the apostle John, who had seen and tasted and handled and preached the word of life, send Christians to his epistles, or any other part of scripture, to be their rule? Nay, he directed them to the anointing as a sufficient teacher. 1 John ii. 17. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. John vii. 38. He that hath the fountain of life in him, issuing out rivers of living water continually, hath he need to go forth to fetch in water? The kingdom of heaven is within you," saith Christ; and he bids "seek the kingdom." Light the candle, sweep thine own house, seek diligently for the kingdom; there it is, if thou canst find it. Now he that hath found the kingdom within, shall he look without, into words spoken concerning the kingdom, to find the laws of the kingdom? Are not the laws of the kingdom to be found within the kingdom? Shall the kingdom be in the heart, and the laws of the kingdom written without in a book? Is not the gospel the ministration of the Spirit? And shall he who hath received the Spirit run back to the letter to be his guide? Shall the living Spirit, that gave forth the Scriptures, be present, and not have pre-eminence above his own words? What is the proper intent of the letter? Is it not to testify of the Spirit, and to end in the Spirit? The law, the prophets, John, led to Christ in the flesh; and he was to be the increasing light,

when they should decrease. Christ's words in the flesh, the apostles' words afterwards, and all words since, are but to lead to Christ in the spirit, to the eternal, living substance; and when words of Christ, of the apostles, or any other words spoken from the same spirit in these days, have brought to the spirit, to the feeling and settling of the soul in the living foundation, and to the building and perfecting of the man of God therein, they have attained their end and glory. But to cry up these, not understanding their voice, but keeping at a distance from the thing that they invite to; the words hereby are put out of their place, out of their proper use and service, and so attain neither their end nor their glory. And though man put that upon them which seems to be a greater glory, namely: to make them his rule and guide; yet, it being not a true glory, it is no glory, but a dishonor both to them and to the Spirit, who gave them to another end.

Now for the other part of the objection, that if men should be left to their own spirits, and should follow the guidance of their own spirits, it would produce confusion and uncertainty: I do ackdowledge it; it would do so.—But here is no leaving of a man to his own spirit spoken of or intended, but the directing and guiding of a man to the Word and Spirit of life; to know and hear the voice of Christ, which gathers and translates man out of his own spirit into his Spirit: and here is no confusion or uncertainty; but order, certainty, and stability.

The light of God's Spirit is a certain and infallible rule, and the eye that sees that, is a certain eye; whereas man's understanding of the scriptures is uncertain and fallible; he, having not the true ear, receiveth such a literal, uncertain knowledge of things into his uncertain understanding, as deceives his soul. And here man, in the midst of his wisdom and knowledge of the scriptures, is lost in his own erring and uncertain mind, and his soul deceived, for want of a true root and foundation of certainty in himself. But he that is come to the true Shepherd, and knows his voice, he cannot be deceived. Yea, he can read the scriptures

safely, and taste the true sweetness of the words that came from the life; but man who is out of the life feeds on the husks, and can receive no more. He hath gathered a dead, dry, literal, husky knowledge out of the scripture, and that he can relish; but should the life of the words and things there spoken of be opened to him, he could not receive them, he himself being out of that wherein they were written, and wherein alone they can be understood. But poor man having lost the life, what should he do? He can do no other but cry up the letter, and make as good shift with it as he can; though his soul the mean while is starved, and lies in famine and death, for want of the bread of life, and a wrong thing is fed.

The Scribes and Pharisees made a great noise about the law and ordinances of Moses, exclaiming against Christ and his disciples as breakers and profaners of them; yet they themselves did not truly honor the law and ordinances of Moses, but their own doctrines, commandments, and traditions. So those now who make a great noise about the Scriptures, and about the institutions of the apostles, do not honor the Scriptures, or the institutions of the apostles; but their own meanings, their own conceivings, their own inventions and imaginations thereupon. They run to the Scriptures with that understanding which is out of the truth, and which never shall be let into the truth; and so being not able to reach and comprehend the truth as it is, they study, they invent, they imagine a meaning; they form a likeness, a similitude of the truth as near as they can, and this must go for the truth; and this they honor and bow before as the will of God; which being not the will of God, but a likeness of their own inventing and forming, they worship not God, they honor not the Scriptures, but they honor and worship the works of their own brain. And every scripture which man hath thus formed a meaning out of, and hath not read in the true and living light of God's eternal Spirit, he hath made an image by, he hath made an idol of; and the respect and honor he gives this meaning, are not a respect and honor given to God, but to his own image, to his own idol. Oh,

how many are your idols, ye Christians of England, as ye think yourselves to be! How many are your idols, ye gathered churches! How full of images and idols are ye, ye spiritual notionists, who have run from one thing to another, with the same mind and spirit wherewith ye began at first! But the founder of images has never been discovered and destroyed in you, and so he is still at work among you all; and great will your sorrow and distress be, when the Lord's quick eye searcheth him out, and revealeth his just wrath against him.

In my heart and soul I honor the Scriptures, and long to read them throughout with the pure eye, and in the pure light of the living Spirit of God: but the Lord preserve me from reading one line of them in my own will, or interpreting any part of them according to my own understanding, but only as I am guided, led, and enlightened by him, in the will and understanding which come from him. And here all scripture, every writing of God's Spirit, which is from the breath of his life, is profitable to build up and perfect the man of God; but the instructions, the reproofs, the observations, the rules, the grounds of hope and comfort, or whatever else which man gathers out of the Scriptures (he himself being out of the life), have not the true profit, nor build up the true thing; but both the gatherings and the gatherer are for destruction. And the Lord will ease the Scripture, of the burden of man's formings and invention from it, and recover its honor again, by the living presence and power of that Spirit that wrote it; and then it shall be no longer abused and wrested by man's earthly and unlearned mind, but, in the hands of the Spirit, come to its true use and service to the seed, and to the world.

2. The true worship was lost.

The true worship of God in the gospel is in the Spirit. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." John iv. 23. The true

worship is in the spirit, and in the truth, and the true worshippers worship there; and such worshippers the Father seeks, and such worship he accepts; but all other worship is false worship, and all other worshippers are false worshippers; such worshippers as God seeks not, nor can accept their worship. Did God refuse Cain's sacrifice formerly? and can he accept any sacrifice or worship now that is offered in that nature? Why, he that worships out of the Spirit, he worships in that nature; but he that worships aright, must have his nature changed, and must worship in that thing wherein he is changed, in that faith, in that life, in that nature, in that Spirit whereby and whereto he is changed. For without being in this, and keeping in this, it is impossible to please God in any thing. He that is the true worshipper is a believer, and in his worship he must keep to his rule, the law of faith, the law of the Spirit of Life in him, the law which he receives by faith fresh from the Spirit of Life continually. He must hear and observe the voice of the living Word in all his worship, and worship in the presence and power and guidance of that, as that moves, and as that carries on, or God is not worshipped in the Spirit. I shall instance only in prayer. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Eph. vi. 18. Mark: *all prayer and supplication* must be *in the Spirit;* yea, it must be *always* in the Spirit, which speaks in the heart to God, and makes the intercession, or it is no prayer. If a man speak ever so much from his own spirit, with ever so much earnestness and affection, yet it is no prayer, no true prayer, but only so far as the Spirit moves to it, and so far as the Spirit leads and guides in it. If a man begin without the Spirit, or go on without the Spirit, this is out of the worship; this is in his own will, and so will-worship; and according to his own understanding, and so fleshly worship; both which are to be crucified, and not to be followed in any thing under the gospel. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit," (here are the true worshippers, "the circumcision;" and here is the true worship, "in the Spirit;" and they have no bounds and limits in the

flesh, wherein their strength and confidence are broken) "and have no confidence in the flesh." If a man address himself to any worship of God without his Spirit, hath he not confidence in the flesh? If he begin without the moving of his Spirit, doth he not begin in the flesh? If he go on, without the Spirit's carrying on, doth he not proceed in the strength and confidence of the flesh? But the worship of the Spirit is in its will, and in its time, and is carried on by its light and power, and keeps down the understanding and affectionate part of man, wherein all the world worship, and offer up the unaccepted sacrifices, even *the lame* and *the blind*, which God's soul hates.

Now this worship, as it is out of man's will and time, and in that which continueth, so it is continual. There is a continual praying unto God. There is a continual blessing and praising of his name, in eating, or drinking, or whatever else is done. There is a continual bowing to the majesty of the Lord in every thought, in every word, in every action, though it be in worldly things and occasions; yet the Spirit of the Lord is seen there, and the tongue confesseth him there, and the knee boweth to him there. This is the true worship, and this is the rest or sabbath wherein the true worshippers worship. When the creation of God is finished; when the child is formed in the light, and the life breathed into him; then God brings him forth into his holy land, where he keeps his sabbath. They that are in the faith, which is the substance of the things hoped for under the law, are come from all the shadows and types of the law, and from all the heathenish observations of days and times in the spirit of this world, where the spirit of man is hard at work, into the true sabbath, into the true rest, where they have no more to work, but God works all in them in his own time, according to his own pleasure. "We which have believed, do enter into rest." Heb. iv. 3. "And he that is entered into his rest, hath ceased from his works, as God from his." verse 10. He that hath the least taste of faith, knows a measure of rest, finding the life working in him, and his soul daily led further and further into life by

:king of the life, and the heavy yoke of his own
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ıt what is the worship now in the apostasy?
mong the Papists, a very gross worship; a worship
e carnal than ever the worship of the law was: for that,
ugh in its nature it was outward and carnal, yet it was
ıght and prescribed by the wisdom of God, and was prof-
ıble in its place, and to its end; but this was invented by
ıe corrupt wisdom, and set up in the corrupt will of man,
ınd hath no true profit, but keeps from the life, from the
power, from the Spirit, in fleshly observations, which feed
and please the fleshly nature. Look upon their days consc-
crated to saints, and their canonical hours of prayer, and
their praying in an unknown tongue, with their fastings,
feastings, saying of *Ave-Marys*, *Pater-nosters*, *Creeds*, &c., are
not all these from the life, out of the Spirit, and after the
invention, and in the will of the flesh? Ah! their stink is
greater than the flesh-pots of Egypt.

And the worship of the Protestants comes too near them:
for their worship is also from a fleshly principle, and in their
own times and wills, and according to their own understand-
ing and apprehension of things, and not from the rising up
and guidance of the infallible life of the Spirit in them; for
that they will quench. They also observe days and times,
and perishing ordinances, and are not come out of the flesh,
into that Spirit where the worship is to be known, and to
be in.

3. The faith, the true faith, was lost.

The faith which gives victory over the world; the faith
which feeds the life of the just, and slays the unjust; the
faith which is pure, the mystery whereof is held in a pure
conscience; the faith which gives entrance into the rest of
God; the faith which is the substance of things hoped for,

and the evidence of things not seen; this hath been lost, and is not yet to be found among those who go for Christians.

For those who challenge the name of Christians, and say they believe in Christ, and have faith in him, cannot with their faith overcome the world; but are daily overcome by the world. Where is there a Christian, but he is either in the honors, or in the fashions, or in the customs, or in the worships of the world, if not in them all? He is so far from overcoming these, that he is overcome with them; yea, so overcome, so drunk therewith, that he hath even lost his senses, and thinks he may be a Christian, and in a good state while he is there.

And the life of the just is not fed by their faith, but the unjust nature is fed, and the righteous witness, which is raised up and lives by the true faith, is kept down, and cannot bring forth his life in them, because of their unbelief; for that is the proper name of their faith; for being not true faith, it is not faith, but unbelief.

And the faith of Christians (so called) is not a mystery (they know not the mystery of it, which is held in a pure conscience), but consists in believing an historical relation, and in a fleshly improving of that, and can be held in an impure conscience.

Neither are they entered into rest by their faith; for they know not the sabbath in the Lord, but are still in a shadowy sabbath.

Neither is it the substance of what they hope for; but the substance of what they hope for is strange to them. They are not come to "Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to God the Judge, Christ the Mediator, and the blood of sprinkling," and so to unity and certainty in the life; but are in opinions, ways, and practices suitable to the earthly spirit; which may easily be shaken, and must be shaken down to the ground, if ever they know the building of God, and the true faith.

4. The love, the true love, was lost.

The innocent love, which thinks no ill, nor wishes no ill, much less can do any ill to any; but suffereth long, and is kind, meek, humble, not seeking its own, but the good of others; this love *is lost.* The love unfeigned is banished; a feigned love, such a love as enmity and violence proceed from, is got in the place of it. The true love loves the enemy, and cannot return enmity for enmity, but seeks the good of them who hate it: but this love can persecute and hate that which it calls the friend, nay, the brother, because of some difference in opinion or practice. The love that was in Christ, taught him to lay down his life for his sheep; and he that hath the same love, can lay down his life for his brother. But the love that is now amongst Christians tends rather to the taking away of life.

What is the love amongst the Papists? See their inquisitions, their wraths, their fire and faggot, &c.

What is their love in New England? Is it not a love that can imprison or banish their brother, if he differ but a little from them in judgment or practice about their worship? Yea, they can whip, burn in the hand, cut off ears, just like the bishops of Old England. If one had told them, when they fled from the persecution of the bishops here, that they themselves should have done such things, they would have been apt to reply, with Hazael, What! are we dogs? But they fled from the cross, which would have crucified that persecuting spirit, and so carried it alive with them; and being alive, it grew by degrees to as great an head there, as it did in the bishops here.

And what is the love here in Old England? Is it not a love that whips, stocks, imprisons, stones, jeers? Yea, the very teachers (which should be patterns of love to others), they will cast into prison, and distrain the goods of their brother, even almost to his undoing, for maintenance, according to the law of the land made in the apostasy. See *the Record of Sufferings for Tithes in England,* which may

make any tender heart bleed to read it, and is like to lie as a brand of infamy on the magistracy and ministry of England to succeeding generations. Is this the love of the righteous seed? Or is it Cain's love, which is in profession, in word, in show, but not in deed and in truth? And how can these love God? Nay, if the true love of God were in them, this enmity could not stand, nor such fruits of it shoot forth. But they have not seen the Father or the Son. And that life of them which appears in the earth, the evil spirit in man seeks to destroy, that he may keep up his own image and shadow of life, which the nature of the true life in its appearance fights against. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."—And by this may all men know, that those that now go for Christians are not Christ's disciples, in that they do not love one another. They are not at unity in the light, and so cannot love one another there; but are only in unity in forms, in opinions, in professions, in practices; so any difference there stirs up the enmity, causing risings in the heart against them at least, if it proceed not further. The true love grows from true union and fellowship in the light; where that is not known, there cannot be true love in the Spirit, but a feigned love in the flesh.

5. The true hope, joy, and peace are lost.

The true ground of hope is Christ in the heart, and the true hope is that hope which ariseth from this ground, from the feeling of Christ there; "Christ in you the hope of glory." Col. i. 27. What is the true Christian's hope? It is Christ in him; he "hath eternal life abiding in him;" and he knows that cannot but lead to glory. But what is the common Christian's hope? He fastens his hope upon the relation and his belief of an history. "He that believeth shall be saved." I believe; therefore I shall be saved.—And thus, as he hath got up a wrong faith, and a wrong love, so he gets up a wrong hope. And this hope will perish; for it is the hope of the hypocrite, or an hope in the

... understanding, or from flashes which
affectionate part, from a fire and sparks of his
from whence he fetches his warmth and comf

And the true peace stands in the reconciliat
by having that broken down which causeth tl
to which the wrath is, wherever it is found.
God breaks down the wall of separation in tl
blood of Jesus, wherein is the life, cleanseth
there, maketh the heart pure, uniteth the pure
pure God: here is union, here is fellowship, l
but the common Christian's peace is from a m
ng of scriptures, while the wall of separatio
while wickedness lodges in the heart. They
elves, from scripture words, into an apprehens
s at peace with them, and that they are in uni
while that of God which is in them, witne
hem, and checks them, and wars with them;
not one with it, and cannot be, in that natur
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. The true repentance, conversion, and regen
been lost.

The true repentance is from ...

should have been crucified, hath been pleased and fed with its religion.

The true conversion is from the power of Satan to God, from the darkness to the light: but in the apostasy, men have not known God or Satan, the light or the darkness; but have mistook, taking the one for the other, worshipping the devil instead of God, Rev. xiii. 4. and following the dark conceivings of their own and other men's minds concerning scripture, and calling them light.

Regeneration is a changing of man, whereby the birth is born of the Spirit; the stripping of the creature of its own nature, of its own understanding, of its own will, and forming it anew in the womb of the Spirit; so that the old creature is passed away, and comes forth a new thing, which grows up daily in the new life towards the fulness of Christ. But men have been so far from being born of the Spirit, that they have not so much as known the gift of the Spirit in them; but to this day are enemies, and at a distance from that of God in them, which is pure. And if they could but open their eyes, they would see that their birth is fleshly, and consists, at best, but in such a conformity to the letter, as the old nature may imitate and attain; but the immortal seed is not sprung up in them, nor they dead to the mortal, nor alive to the immortal.

7. The true wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption are lost.

The true wisdom stands in the fear of God, and departing from evil: this those that are taught of God learn, and thereby are made wise unto salvation. But most that are called Christians are not come to the fear of God; and many are got above it, looking upon it as legal, and not appertaining to the gospel; but the gospel state is love, which casteth out fear. Doth the love of God refuse or cast out the fear of God? Nay: it casts out the fear that brings bondage; the fear that came in by transgression; which fear is stirred up, and discovered by the law. And this is a fear of sin, or a

fear arising from sin, through the law's manifestation of it, and the wrath against it, which causeth both the fear, and much bondage from the fear: and this the gospel (which discovers the love, the mercy, the grace, the power, and unites to them) frees from, and casts out. But then there is a fear of God; a fear wrought in the heart by his Spirit; a fear which is part of the new covenant ("I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me"); a fear which is part of the "everlasting gospel," Rev. xiv. 6, 7. and "endureth for ever." Ps. xix. 9. And this fear is not bondage, but liberty; it is indeed bondage to the unjust, but liberty to the just; for where this fear is, sin is departed from; it sets free; it delivers the feet out of the snare of iniquity: there is true liberty. Can sin prevail in that heart, where the pure, clean fear of God is placed by God to keep it down? The love of God doth not cast out this fear, but keeps in this fear; and this fear keeps the heart clean from the evil which defiles, and preserves the love from the enmity, which springs up where this fear is not. Now this fear, in the apostasy, was lost, or else what needed there an especial ministry to be raised up to preach it again. Rev. xiv. 6, 7. And the estate of Christians everywhere doth manifest this loss; for their hearts are not kept clean, which showeth that the fear (which doth keep clean where it is) is wanting in them. There is pollution, there is filth, there is deceit, there are high-mindedness, self-conceitedness, and love of the world, and worldly vanities, and many other evils to be found in the hearts of those that go for Christians; and the purity of heart (which comes from the fear, and stands in the wisdom) is not known. They are wise to do evil; but want the knowledge to avoid the evil, and do the good. They are wise to get and enjoy the world; but know not the true riches. They are wise to gather together many scripture words against sin, and yet still keep the nature and life of it in the heart, and it is as a sweet morsel under the tongue. They are wise to apply promises to comfort themselves with (when sometimes they receive a just wound in their hearts from the righteous One); but know not that

nature, nor that estate and condition, to which all the promises are made; but are yet in that nature, and in that estate and condition, to which the curse appertains.

The true righteousness stands in the faith, in hearing and obeying the word of faith. How comes the righteousness of the law, but by hearing and obeying the voice of the law? And how comes the righteousness of the gospel, but by hearing and obeying the Word of faith, who is preached, and the preacher of righteousness, in the heart? The Apostle Paul makes this comparison. Rom. x. The righteousness of the law speaketh on this wise, "The man that doeth these things, shall live in them." But how speaketh the Word of faith? "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart;" he that doeth that, he that heareth that, shall live in that. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Disobedience to the law is unrighteousness, and brings death; and disobedience to the living Word is unrighteousness, and cannot be justified, but condemned; and obedience to it cannot be condemned, but justified: so that when the soul hears, believes, and obeys, then it is justified; then its former sins are forgotten, and this is imputed to it unto righteousness. But when the soul will not hear, will not believe, will not obey, this unbelief is judged in him, and his sins retained, and not remitted. Now is not this a just and equal way of justification, O ye sons of men! Is not your way unequal? Shall a man continue in the unbelief and rebellion against Christ, against the light, against the faith, and yet be justified by Christ, by the light, by the faith? This cannot be; God's way of imputation will stand; but man's invented way of imputation, which sprung up in the apostasy, will not stand. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, the blood cleanseth; but not otherwise. If we walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, there is no condemnation; and not otherwise. The true baptism is the plunging down of the old thing, with all its filth, and the raising up of a new thing; and it is the new thing, the circumcision, the baptism, which is justified. God justifieth

purgeth out the old leaven, and makes ...
now, in Christians that have grown up in the
seed is not known, this leaven is not so much
but their holiness consists in a conformity to
ure, received into the old heart and underst
what a noise hath this made in the world, all
the apostasy! as if this were the heir, and sho
kingdom. Nay, nay; the heir hath appear
presence it is seen, that this is not the heir) a
be able to kill him; but he shall live to enj
ance, and the inheritance shall not be yours.

Redemption consists in being bought, by t
life, out of sin, out of death, out of the car
power of the devil. It is a casting off the s
of the heart, with all that he brought in, an
from his power. It is a dissolving of the wor
the devil hath wrought in the heart, and a se
which is immortal, at liberty, free from sin,
righteousness: this is the true redemption.
demption in the apostasy is a feigned redem
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but the strong man is still in the heart, and
in death, and brings forth fruits of death dai

The Christians formerly (in the first day c

the thing. But Christians now, in the apostasy, have got several apprehensions from the words, without feeling the thing the words speak of; and there lies their religion.—And now the true heir being come, holding forth the thing they have been all talking of, all sects upon the earth are mad against him, and would fain kill him. They would not have the living substance, which is the heir, live, and nothing be esteemed life but that; but they would have their dead apprehensions from the words live, and their dead forms and practices owned; and the heir of life must come in their way, in the way that they have hoped and waited for him, or they will not own him. Awake! awake! O ye sons of the apostasy, and of the night! rise up out of the fleshly wisdom, out of the dead fleshly interpretations of scriptures, out of the dead invented forms of worship, and bow to the heir; kiss the Son, lest ye feel the force of that dreadful sentence, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." For of a truth the great Prophet is risen, and speaks in the heart, and his sheep hear his voice (there are many faithful witnesses thereof); and he that will not hear his voice, must be cut off; there is no avoiding of it: for the two-edged sword is in his hand, and he will cut down the transgressor.

8. The church, the true church, was lost.

The true church was a company gathered out of the world into God, begotten of, and gathered into his life by the living Word, and so had a true place and habitation in God. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, styles them a church in God. A church under the gospel is made up of true Israelites, gathered out of their own spirits and nature into the measure of the Spirit of God in them, as Christ was into the fulness. They are such as are begotten of God, born of his Spirit, led by him out of Egypt, through the wilderness, to Sion the holy mount; there they meet with the elect, precious corner-stone which is laid in Sion; and

and such a temple as Christ never fails to b
of. But the great temple, the full church,
assembly of the first-born. This is the uner
ground of truth: this always bore up truth; tru
here; but when it was at any time lost in the
from hence be recovered again when God p
far as he pleased. Indeed the law of the Lor
gone forth from this Sion, and the living w
Jerusalem.

But what hath the church been in the apost
ing of stone, say some; and that not only a
but here in England also. Many have called
house a church, a temple, the house of God,
to be a holy place; and have showed it by t
keeping off their hats while they were in it.

Others say, not the stone building, but t
meet there, are the church; whereof many a
fane; yea, so far from being gathered into th
ignorant of his motions, that they are ready t
hear a man speak of being moved by the Spi
these? Are these living stones, whereupon t
alone can be built? Are these children of t
these are children of the night; children bro

being not themselves gathered out of the apostasy from the Spirit, into the Spirit again; and so they build but with the same stones as were in the old building, and not with the new and living stones, and so are but a more refined appearance of a church; but not a true church, not a church in God, and by the gathering of his Spirit; but of their own gathering, after a form, according as they have imagined from their reading and studying of the Scriptures.

9. (Which may be the last instance.) The ministry, the true ministry, hath been lost.

The true ministry was a ministry made and appointed by the Spirit, by the gift of the Spirit bestowed on them, and by the Spirit sending of them, and appointing them to their work. Christ bid his apostles and disciples wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Spirit, and when he had given them the Spirit, he gave them to the church for the work of the ministry. Eph. iv. 11, 12. Acts xx. 28. And if none can be a member of the true church but by being begotten out of death into life by the Spirit, surely none can be able to minister to him who is so begotten, but by the same Spirit. So these receiving their ministry of the Lord Jesus, Acts xx. 24. and the gift of the Spirit from him, they were made "able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit." 2 Cor. iii. 6. They were able in God to minister from his Spirit to the spirits of his people; and they did not minister a literal knowledge of things to the understanding of man; but they led men to the Spirit of God, and ministered spiritual things to that spiritual understanding which was given them of God. Neither did they make use of their own wisdom and art to tickle the natural ear; but spoke to the conscience, with the demonstration of the Spirit in the sight of God, as it pleased the Spirit to give them utterance.

But how have ministers been made in the apostasy? By orders from men, set up in their own wills, after their own inventions. And how have they been qualified, but by hu-

ministers, and then he is able to minister
things of man, according to human skill; a
dark night of apostasy, must go for a true cal
try of God. Indeed, they are as true minister
is to which they minister; but they never wer
be, thus made ministers of the church of Go
alone can form and build his church, so he al
appoint the ministers thereof. And though
seen the grossness of this, make their ministe
their church; yet neither is that out of the
only a striving of man to get out of it; whicl
possibly do till he meet with the Spirit of Go
of it. So that that ministry also is but an inv
made by man, and comes not from the Spirit,
minister spirit to the spirit.

Object. But hath there been no true relig
days of the apostles? No true rule, no tru
true faith, no true love, no true hope, joy, or p
repentance, conversion, and regeneration!
lom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemp
church, no true ministry! What is become o
fathers? Did they all perish? And hath not
converted many to God? Were not ye yoursel
by it? Nay, have not many of them been ma

eration, &c., which have been cried up in nations for the truth, the churches in nations, the ministry in nations, all these have been corrupted, and never recovered their true state to this day. There have been changes from one thing to another; but the restoration hath not been known. The whorish spirit hath been hunted and pursued, and so run out of one form into another, traversing her way, and changing her ground and garments; but hath not been taken and judged to the death: and the true spirit hath not been able to find the bed of her husband; but hath wandered from mountain to hill all the time of this cloudy and dark day, forgetting her resting place.

Yet, though the whole earth was corrupted, and false doctrine and worship set up everywhere among the nations, which continued the fornication and whoredom from the Spirit of life in the public ways and national worships; notwithstanding this, even all this while God reserved a seed to himself, which he caused to spring up in a remnant, and which he moved and carried on to witness against somewhat of these corruptions, in their several ages and generations. And as fast as the beast killed and knocked down these, God raised up more: yea, though the whorish spirit, in some nations, painted herself curiously, leaving some of the gross doctrines and worships of popery, and got into a more refined way; yet God raised up witnesses against her there also, and still doth, into what form soever she gets: for though of late she hath decked herself very pleasingly, as she thinks, and covered herself round with scripture words and professions and practices as like as ever she can form them to the practices of former saints; yet quick and lively is the Spirit of God that searcheth after her, who hath found her out, and raised up witnesses against her there also.

Now this seed, this remnant, though they were not able to recover the possession of the life and power that was lost; yet they had a true taste of it, and their testimony which they gave out from that taste was true: and so far as they kept to this testimony in the faith and in the patience which they had learned and received from God (though but in a

low measure), they were accepted of him. So that all were not lost in this night of darkness; but such as feared God, and knew and hearkened to his voice, had the testimony of his presence with them, and tasted of his life and power in measure. God was not a hard master to them; but tender and gentle, and contented to reap what he sowed. But the appearance of God in this dark time was weak and low, and easy to be made a prey of. And this is very observable, that so long as the simplicity ran pure, it was preserved; but so soon as ever the spirit of man was tempted either into any old, or into any new-invented form, the wisdom of the flesh got in with it, grew up more than it, and when it had gathered strength, corrupted the vessel, betrayed the simplicity, and lost the life. There was a precious thing stirring in queen Mary's days, the life whereof was more hurt and suppressed by that dead form of Episcopacy succeeding afterwards, than by the fore-going persecution. The persecution did clear and brighten it; but the fleshly form of Episcopacy brought death over it. Thus many precious beginnings and buddings-forth of the life have been betrayed in these late days; and the forms of Presbytery, Independency, and Anabaptism, have been little less than graves to bury and keep down the life. How many spirits, that had a precious savor in them at their entrance into those forms, did soon become fleshly, earthly, and very unsavory, losing the quickness and freshness that were in them before, and falling into the deadness of the form, withering with it.

And as touching the ministry, though in itself it was evil, being in the degeneration from the true ministry all this time of the apostasy, and the persons therein, for the most part, very corrupt, being brought up to it as a trade, and making use of it as a trade; yet I do believe that there was a simplicity of heart in some persons among them, which did cause them, in some degree of faithfulness, to seek the Lord, his service, and the good of souls. And in the time of ignorance and darkness, it pleased God to wink at and overlook the evil, and to cause good to pass from the good in them to the good in others, through the evil that hung

about both. And this was the great tenderness of the Lord, in pity to his poor creatures, who were very destitute of help in the thick night of darkness, and should not now be made use of to justify and keep up the evil. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unkind! because his mercy and goodness extended to you, notwithstanding the evil which might have hindered, will ye make that an argument to keep up the evil, and to oppose the light which discovers it? Because God caused light to shine through the darkness, and visited man in the dark, will ye therefore set up the darkness as his proper way of ministration? The corrupt way, call, and exercise of the corrupt ministry could not keep out the tender love of God; but he had respect to the simplicity of some who were found in it, and to the simplicity of others who waited on him for instruction there, and did please to give some answer to both. And will ye make this ungenerous use of it, to interpret it as his approbation of that ministry, which sprung up in the apostasy from him, among those that were apostatized, and is a great dishonor to him, and the abhorring of his soul? A ministry of Christ, a ministry set up by his Spirit, is precious; but a ministry made by man, according to his will, and ministering in his wisdom, the soul of the Lord beareth as a burden, and is pressed with it; and as he raiseth up his own life, will ease himself of it. And what do they minister from, but the literal part of the Scriptures, which killeth, and cannot give life. And what do they minister with, but their own understanding part; what meanings they can invent, what deductions their wisdom can draw from the Scriptures; but do not see the true meaning in the infallible and unerring light: and what do they minister to, but the understanding part in you? Whereas there is somewhat else to be ministered to by the true minister. And what do they minister to you, but food for the understanding; food for the serpentine wisdom, which always fed upon knowledge, but never upon the true bread. And hereby another thing is fed in you, and not your souls; but they are kept in leanness and barrenness, under death and the bondage of

corruption (which Paul cried out upon as a wretched state, and could find no ease, rest, or freedom from condemnation there), and without the true life and redemption. I do not deny but ye may there meet with some kind of warmth in the affectionate part, which may be heated by a fire and sparks of man's kindling and blowing up; and this may go for life with you now: but in the presence of the truth, where the eye is open, it vanisheth; yea, the Spirit of the Lord hath so blown upon it, that it is even withered in the sight of a more inferior eye in many people.

POSITION III.

That there is to be a recovery, a true recovery, out of this state of apostasy, into the true state of Christianity again.

God will not let the desolations of Sion remain for ever; but he will again "build up Sion, and appear in his glory." He will set his "king upon his holy hill of Sion. The new Jerusalem shall again come down from heaven. The man-child," which was taken up, "shall come down again, conquering, and to conquer; and the Lamb shall get the victory" over the whore, and over all her apostatized nations and churches, that have a name and not the life; and he shall "rule them with a rod of iron," and make them a desolation which have made his holy city desolate, and trampled them down which have trampled upon it. "The lofty city he will lay low; he will lay it low, even to the ground: he will bring it even to the dust: the foot shall tread it down, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy." The whore shall be judged, with the beast whereupon she rode. The life, which they trod upon, shall rise up in the mighty power of the Lord, and overturn them. "The everlasting gospel shall be again preached to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people." Rev. xiv. 6. Mark: the gospel that

was preached to the nations all the time of the apostasy, was not the everlasting gospel; that gospel did not bring life and immortality to light; but they were hid from men's eyes, and men had only a sound of words instead of the thing. And thus poor nations, kindreds, people, tongues, were everywhere bewitched with a form of things; with an outward knowledge, a perishing knowledge in the perishing part; a vain, traditional, invented worship, which stands in the wisdom and will of man; but had no union and fellowship with that which is everlasting. And thus all the nations, in the smoke of the bottomless pit, ran into the pit from whence the smoke came. But the Lord hath a time to pity the poor nations, and to send forth his true everlasting gospel again, to deliver the nations from that witchery and sorcery and spiritual enchantment which got up in the dark. And as this everlasting light springs up, then down goes Babylon; down go all invented doctrines, all invented forms, all invented worships, and that wisdom and evil spirit that raised them up. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! that great city! because she made all nations drunk of the wine of the cup of her fornication." Rev. xiv. 8. And now the new wine of the kingdom, which is tasted of in the everlasting gospel, purges out the old wine; and the drunkenness which thereby came upon the nations wastes. And they that have tasted of this life, and know this life, can never be bewitched back again by the whorish spirit, to dead forms and likenesses without life. Nay, when Babylon falls, she can rise no more. Though the life fall often, it can rise again; but when the witchery from the life is discovered and cast into the pit, it can get out no more. Indeed the beast hath had all the strength of the nations, and the whore hath had all the wisdom, all the esteem, all the honor.—Who can make war with the beast? Who can show miracles and wonders like the false prophets? Who can teach, but the wise, learned, orthodox men, that have the arts, and know the original? Yea, there is another that can make war, and a prophet that can preach better than they; one that can preach life; one that can preach the everlasting

ye have set up her inventions; but have
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let in, that which is everlasting, assure yo
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of the refreshments it brings to others; a
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the times and seasons. That will not b
which was borne with formerly; but as t
of God to salvation have more appeare
against those who now resist will appe
death shall have its sting, which they that
and hate the light, shall feel.

POSITION IV.

That they that are in those things which
in the times of the apostasy, are not y
covery from the apostasy.

They that are in the doctrines and
which have been formed since, are not in

in the worship, or under the ministry, or of any church which hath been set up since by the power of man, or from the inventing wisdom (though this wisdom hath founded its inventions upon the Scriptures), are not in the true worship, in the true church, or under the true ministry. They that are in the faith, which has since been gathered into the understanding, and did not spring up from the mystery of life in the heart, are not in the true faith. The same may be said of love, hope, joy, peace, and all the rest mentioned before; yea, and all other things in religion; for all have been corrupted, even the inward part. And while here hath been a great contention about the forms of worship and church-government, the power of godliness, and the government of Christ in the heart, have been lost.

Observe diligently what we have now to say. When the apostles, who had the true ministry, preached the gospel, they stirred and raised up the power of God in the heart; and the power of sin, corruption, and deceit sunk down, and was under foot, and trampled upon by the power. But when antichrist and the false prophets arose, they raised up the corruption again, and fed it with doctrines of deceit; but the power sunk down, and was not felt, but was buried all that time of the prevailing of the corruption and deceit. Now the power was not lost all this while in itself; but only lost to man, so that he knew not where to find it. Yet this power, in this time of loss, did stir and move, and make them in some degree sensible of the loss, causing them to pant and seek after the living truth. And this was good; this was of God. But then there was an evil spirit, which was near to the good, and lay lurking in the serpentine wisdom of the heart, and that drew the mind (which was bent towards the seeking of a right thing) a wrong way, that cried, *Lo here! lo there!* look into the Scriptures; the church was so and so; go, get into such a thing; the Christians there did so and so; go, do such a thing; there is the way; there thou shalt meet with the life and the power. And thus it drew from that which stirred within, into an imitation of a form without, and there they came to a loss. I

dare appeal to all honest hearts, was there not a good thing stirring in you, when ye went into your church forms? Were ye not led in simplicity, hoping to meet with life and power there? Nay, did ye not lose it there, and become deader? Did ye meet with the life and power there? I know, if ye have not forgotten the taste of life, ye will confess to me, that that which now ye have is not life, but far short of that which ye had when ye entered into your form. Ah! poor hearts, the whore bewitched you. The harlot in your bosoms, and the false prophets without, helped to increase the witchery, crying, Lo here! and lo there! but ye knew not that the kingdom of heaven was within, from whence that stirring of life was in you, where ye should have kept, and not have gone forth: but now ye are dead, and buried in your graves, lying there without sense, and are now got into the spirit of the world, and into the enmity against that life in others, which was then your life. And do ye know where ye are, and what ye are doing? Can ye bear to hear it?

Of a truth ye are in the snare of the enemy, in the enchantment from the life, in the whore's bed, in the strumpet's bosom, and not in the bosom of our beloved. And your practices are branches of the fornication, parcels of the whoredom, inventions which have been gathered in by that understanding, and set up by that will, which whored from God. They are the effects and products of the whore's cup, which gets new dresses, new habits, new forms, new ways to cozen and deceive the simple with; but still she remains the whore; and those who are seduced by her are led into her whoredom. For when God discovers and hunts her out of one form, then she decks herself with another, perhaps more seemingly spiritual, more scripture-like, and so more likely to take with the simple heart; and then she lies in wait for the young man to entrap him again, saying, Come in hither; this is the true way of God without doubt. Did not the saints meet with life here formerly? Come thou hither also. Here is the bed of thy beloved; take thy fill of life, thy fill of love. And thus the poor, honest, simple

heart follows her, going like a fool to the correction of the stocks, not knowing that it is for his life, until he come to feel the loss of life. And then if she find she cannot keep him there, but fresh stirrings of life spring up in him again, and withdraw him from that which had deceived him, then she paints again, and lies in wait for him again, to catch him in some more refined appearance, or in some elevated notion, or at least in the shadow of that which is true: for the whore hath not only art and power to invent forms and likenesses of that which is true, and make idols and images of them; but it hath power also given it over the outward court; so that that which is found there, it can make idols and images of; that which is corruptible, it can get into and corrupt, and make an enemy to that life which lived in it before it was corrupted; and when it is corrupted, then there is no more truth or life to be found there, but the idol and the idolatry.

The Apostle John, who forewarned of antichrist, and gave a mark whereby it might be known; namely, by his not confessing Christ come in the flesh, 1 John iv. 3. (which he that setteth up any thing of the old covenant, or any invention or imitation of any thing therein, doth not) bids also beware of idols: "Little children keep yourselves from idols." 1 John v. 21. Now, what is an idol? The Apostle Paul saith, "An idol is nothing in the world." An idol is no true thing in its place; but a false thing set up instead of the true. A false conception of God in the mind is an idol: a false church or temple is an idol: a false minister, who is not made according to the appointment of God, and by the gift of his Spirit, but came in another way, by the appointment of man, is an idol shepherd; and the worship in this church, and by this ministry, is public idolatry; and all the worship in families, which has been erected after the same manner, without the guidance of the Spirit of God, is private idolatry. Were the heathens' temples, altars, priests, sacrifices, and other inventions of theirs (in imitation of the Jews) idolatrous? And are not the inventions of the heath-

enish spirit, or antichristian nature in man, are not they also idolatrous?

Object. But is praying idolatry, preaching idolatry, singing idolatry, baptizing of infants idolatry, breaking of bread idolatry?

Ans. The praying which God appointed is not idolatry: praying in the Spirit of God, when he moves, and according to the will of God, which is only known in the Spirit, is not idolatry; but thy praying in thine own spirit, and at thine own times, and according to thine own will (perhaps in way of imitation of the Jewish morning and evening sacrifices), this is idolatry. This is that which thou hast set up, instead of that which God set up; and so it is not the true thing which God set up, but an idol of thy own making; and so thou worshippest not God therein, but that spirit which helped thee to invent and set up the idol. The same might be said concerning preaching, singing, washing with water, breaking of bread, and whatever else is practised in religion upon these terms.

Object. But doth not the scripture mention these things? And did not the saints practise these things? Surely they were not idolaters! Can I be an idolater in practising that which they practised?

Ans. Nay, thou art mistaken; they are not the things which they practised. The stress of their religion lay in the life of it, in the presence of the Spirit of God in it; it was his breath made it the truth. Now, if thou couldst have the same things that they had, yet without the same living breath, they would be but dead things; but idols. But thou hast not the true form of things either; thou hast not the true church, the true ministry, the true ordinances, according to the form; but things set up in their stead, by the invention of man, in the time of the apostasy from the true things; and what can these be but idols?

"The world wondered after the beast; and they worshipped the dragon, which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast." Rev. xiii. 3, 4. Behold, what was worshipped at the time of the apostasy! that which arose

from the beastly invention of man, and not from the true Spirit of life. And the inventing and setting up of these, and worshipping according to these inventions, is worshipping the dragon (for he getteth in, and lodgeth in man's inventions), and not the living God. And therefore God, at the end of this apostasy, raiseth up a new ministry, to recall the nations from worshipping the dragon to the worship of God again, ver. 6, 7. of that chapter, "what the Gentiles sacrificed" of old, "they sacrificed to devils, and not to God." 1 Cor. x. 20. And what the late Gentiles sacrifice (I mean Christians in the heathenish nature, Christians to whom the outward court was given, Rev. xi. 2. and who have a profession of the saints' words and practices, but without life), they sacrifice not to God either; but to that spirit that helped them to invent and form a likeness or image of the truth. Transgressing the principle of God within, they go from God, and from his worship; and the devil, who went out from the truth, gets in, and they go into his power; and whatever they perform in worship there, is to him; for when they go from the principle of God in them, the devil gets into their hearts, and God goes out; and his true life, power, and worship are not known, but an image or likeness, which the devil sets up instead of the true thing. So then, in that state, let men consider what they worship; for there they cry up ordinances and duties, and kill one another about them, thinking that they worship and honor God thereby; but know not, nor are come to, that wherein God alone can be worshipped and honored.

"I know the blasphmey of them, which say they are Jews, and are not, saith the Spirit." Rev. ii. 9. Is this blasphemy? For a man to call himself a Christian, who is not, what is that? To call that a church, which is not, what is that? To call him a minister of Christ, who is not, what is that? To call those the ordinances of Christ, which are not, what is that? To call that faith, which is not, that justification which is not, &c., what is that? Can ye spy out the blasphemer? Ye have made a great outcry against him long; are ye willing now he should be put to death? The

Lord hath lighted his candle; he is searching for him, and he will find him out: and as we have desired, so it shall be; the Lord will not spare him. Oh be awakened, be awakened, ye heathenish Christians! Open the eye that can see, and behold where ye are, and what ye are doing, and how fast ye are running into the pit. Ye have forgotten God; ye have lost the true line of judgment; ye have lost the key of knowledge; and the light that is in you is darkness, and leads to darkness, though ye cannot possibly believe it. Oh! come back to the remembrance of God, and to true holiness, without which no man shall see him. For the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God; and ye have forgotten him days without number.

POSITION V.

That the only way of recovery out of the apostasy is by returning to, and keeping in, that Spirit from which the apostasy was.

The apostasy came by leaving the Spirit of God, and running after another spirit; and the recovery must be by leaving that other spirit, and returning to the Spirit of God again. How did Christians formerly begin their religion? They began in the Spirit. Gal. iii. 3. And so they were to go on to perfection, and not to intermix any thing of the flesh. And had the anointing been kept to, antichrist and the mystery of iniquity had been kept out; and where that is returned to, the antichristian spirit is purged out by degrees, and the ways thereof discovered and forsaken. Therefore know the whorish spirit in thyself, which is busy to form likenesses in thy mind to seduce thee, and to make thee fall in love with the likenesses which she hath formed in other men's minds; and let her not deceive thee with her paint and gaudy appearances; but know likewise the little seal of life, from which truth springs up in thee, and in

which the Spirit of Truth dwells, and is to be found; and take heed, lest the serpentine wisdom teach thee to despise and turn from it. From this spring it was, that truth sprung up in the witnesses all the time of the apostasy; for they had their testimony from the *Spirit of prophecy*. Rev. xix. 10. So far as they kept to that, they gave a true testimony; so far as their own spirits mixed with it, they corrupted it. But to abide in that was very hard; and there was need of much affliction and persecution to keep the flesh down, and to preserve the life pure. But as the life springs up more strongly, and overcomes that spirit inwardly, (I mean the wise, fleshly spirit) there will be less need of outward afflictions or persecutions; yea, or inward either: but there will be a safe entrance into, and abiding in, the joy, the rest, the peace, where the whore within (which seduced from the life, where the power is, into some form where the power is not) is burnt. Learn then, and know in thyself that Spirit of prophecy which spoke in all the martyrs. Hear that, come to that, keep to that; feel the union, the fellowship, the spreading of that in thee. When that bids thee go, go; when that bids thee come, come; when that bids thee do this, do it. But the flesh is grown strong, and strongly resisteth this Spirit, both inwardly and outwardly; and will not suffer him to rise up in the heart, or to rise up in the nation; but at any time when he stirreth, and offers to speak, or lead to God, there is a reason rises up in the fleshly wisdom, that knocks him down, and denies his voice, and hearkens to another voice instead of his. Thus they first give way to the fleshly wisdom, and suppress the truth in themselves, and then they would go forth and suppress it in others; and they think them mad, and their rage riseth against them where the truth is suffered to grow, and man's reason or fleshly wisdom denied. And thus is the "Lord of glory" evilly entreated, and slain at this day by this generation of Christians, as he was by the Jews slain formerly in the prophets, in that his appearance in a fleshly form, and in his apostles: and his blood will be required; for the earth shall not always drink it up and cover it, nor the adulterous

woman be always able to wipe her mouth, and say, she hath done no wickedness. Ye have saved alive the unjust, and killed the just. The murdering nature is alive in you, O ye Christians! but the Holy One is slain, and lies buried in your graves: and ye have painted your graves, and speak good words of him; but still keep him down, and let another rise up and live in you. Ye cry up that appearance of Christ in the flesh, and the words he then spoke, and the words of his apostles, and think if ye had lived in those days, ye would not have killed either him or his apostles; and yet ye resist and oppose the same life in yourselves and in others, with such a kind of wisdom in the letter as the Pharisees had. Oh what will ye do! the uncircumcised ear is got up in you, and ye cannot hear; and the uncircumcised heart, and ye cannot understand; but when this is told you, ye despise and wonder, and go on in the perishing state. My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my bowels! O England! England! thou that killedst the martyrs in Queen Mary's days; thou that persecutedst the Nonconformists afterwards; thou that wouldst not suffer the people of God to meet together, to seek him with an honest heart; but wouldst confine them to thy gross, formal ways of worship! though the Lord hath appeared, and broken the horns of the oppressors; yet the persecuting spirit is not broken in thee; but thou still huntest after the precious life of the seed, and wouldst not let it spring up in the nation. The spirit of enmity is still up in thee, which knows not the Lord of life; but by a natural instinct opposeth him, and would fain keep up some grave or other, it cares not what, so it might but thereby keep down the life: for thou canst now bear with any form, and cherish it; and thy only enmity is against those who are sent by the Lord to gather out of all forms into the life. How often would the Lord have gathered thee! but thou wouldst not: and yet seeks to gather thee; but still thou wilt not: but, as if the former laws, made in Queen Mary's days, were not sufficient, desirest new laws, to ensnare and entangle the innocent. What will become of thee, or what wilt thou say to the Lord, when he ariseth to plead the cause

of the innocent? For that Spirit which he raised up to witness against the whorish spirit (which lies hid in thy forms of worship and religion, and appears in all thy laws, councils, and ways of government, so far as they were formed, and so far as they are guided, by the wisdom of the flesh) is innocent: even as that Spirit which witnessed formerly against popery and episcopacy was innocent before the Lord, though accused by them as guilty of error in itself, and of disturbance to the public peace, as this is now by thee.

SOME PRINCIPLES

Guiding out of the Apostasy, to the Christian Spirit and Life again.

1. *That there is no salvation but by the true knowledge of Christ.* The Jews had received the ordinances of God, and knew of the Messiah to come, and believed it, and were very zealous in their worship, in observation of circumcision, the passover, new moons, and sabbaths, &c., ("Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?") and yet God complains of them by his prophet, "My people perish for lack of knowledge." And the state is the same under the antichristian apostasy, wherein the whore hath made all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages drunk with the cup of her fornication. The true knowledge and worship have been lost; though the eyes of them that have been in the apostasy, and drunk with the cup, could not see it, no more than the Jews could in their day. But to come close to the thing.

The knowledge of Christ is not literal, traditional, or fleshly, nor can it be received by the natural understanding; but it is spiritual, and the understanding must be given by God which receives it. "He hath given us an understand-

ing, that we may know him that is true." 1 John v. 20. A man may read scriptures, hear sermons, &c., and thereby gather a knowledge into the old understanding: but neither this understanding into which the knowledge is gathered, nor the knowledge itself which is gathered, is spiritual, but fleshly, and so cannot save. He that comes once to receive an understanding from Christ, and to have the knowledge of Christ poured forth from Christ into his heart, knows the difference between that and the understanding into which he gathers things. The knowledge of Christ after the letter (and a faith in him answerable to such knowledge) will not save: but a man must know him in that Spirit, life, and power wherein he lived, if he groundedly hope to be saved by him. 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.

2. *That Christ saves by the new covenant:* not by any thing got into the mind by the oldness of the letter; but by a life begotten, which is new. There are two covenants made mention of in scripture, one whereof is called the old, the other the new. The old belonged to the Jews, which is done away, with their ceremonies, state, and polity. The new, which is better than the former, Christ is the Mediator of. Heb. viii. 6. By mediating between God and the creature, or by bringing them together in, and according to, this covenant, he saves. Man, by his disunion and distance from God, perisheth: by being brought again to God, he lives again; which thing Christ effecteth by the new covenant. So then he that is not led by Christ into that covenant, is not in the state of salvation.

3. *That the new covenant is written in the heart;* or there is no other way of coming into the new covenant, whereof Christ is High-priest and Mediator, but by having the laws of God written in the heart. "This is the covenant, &c. I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts, &c. They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Heb. viii. 10, 11. He is speaking of the covenant whereof Christ is Mediator, ver. 6. which he calls a new covenant, ver. 8. and

saith it is not like the old, ver. 9. instancing in two main particulars, wherein it is very unlike. 1. The old was written outwardly in letters, to be read by the outward eye; but this is written inwardly in the heart and mind, and so can only be read by a spiritual eye. 2. Under the old they needed teaching from men; the priest's lips were to preserve knowledge, and they were to seek the law at his mouth; but now they should have the law so near them, so clearly written in them, that they should need none to teach them. From the law is the knowledge of God; the law is in the heart; and from the law in the heart springs up the knowledge of God in the least and in the greatest that are within this covenant, that they need not say, Know the Lord.—This is the state of the new covenant. which the Christians came to in these days. 1 John ii. 27. But it hath been a strange thing in this dark night of apostasy, and is yet a strange thing to many. But let such consider, Can a man be a Christian, and be out of that covenant whereof Christ is the Mediator? Can a man be brought back again to God by Christ, and yet be out of that covenant whereby Christ brings back men to God? Oh! how hath Satan deluded poor souls in this thick night of darkness, to make men believe they have faith in Christ, and shall be saved thereby; while they are quite ignorant of, and strangers to, that covenant whereby Christ the Mediator saves. "They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest." Mark: there is not the least in this covenant but hath the law so written in his heart, that he need not seek out for knowledge.

4. *That the Spirit of God alone can write the covenant in the heart;* or that Christ writes the covenant by his Spirit.—Man, by all his wisdom, cannot attain it. Man is driven out from God, and cannot find the way back again to him, without the teachings and leadings of God's own Spirit. It is not the being educated in any way of religion from one's childhood, or the leaving of that, and running into any sect afterwards, that will avail any thing hereto; but the alone hearkening to the true voice of the true Spirit. It is written in the prophets concerning the children of this covenant,

that they shall be all taught of God: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord." It is the Lord alone, who by his Spirit teacheth them to come to Christ, and to receive the new covenant into their hearts from Christ: for man is in an incapacity to know or receive Christ, or his covenant, until the Spirit hath fitted and taught him. John xiv. 17.—But when he hath prepared and fitted his heart, then with his own finger he writeth the pure law of the nature and life of Christ therein; by the receipt whereof he cometh out of his own dark spirit and nature into the true knowledge of God, and union with him. "I will put my Spirit within you." Ezek. xxxvi. 27. This is part of the covenant, and indeed that part whereby all the rest is wrought.

5. *Therefore, the first proper step in religion, is to know how to meet with God's Spirit.* There is no progress, no true progress, to be made in the true religion, till a man comes into the covenant; and there is no coming into the covenant but by the Spirit: therefore the first thing that is absolutely necessary to be known in religion, is the Spirit, his writing, or at least his motions and stirrings, in the heart. It may further be evidenced thus: all things in religion, acceptable to God, flow from the Spirit: all knowledge is to come from him; for he alone hath revealed and can reveal truth, and is appointed by Christ to lead into all truth. All worship is to be offered up in him: they that worship the Father, must worship him in the Spirit and in the truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him; but rejecteth all other worshippers and worship, how glorious soever their worship may seem to them: particularly praying is always to be in the Spirit. Ephes. vi. 18. Jude 20. So singing, &c., yea, the whole life and conversation is to be in the Spirit. Gal. v. 25. The mortifying of all corruption is to be done by the Spirit. "If ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. viii. 13. Indeed a Christian is nothing, and can do nothing, without the power and presence of the Spirit of God in him. So then, if nothing in religion can be done (with acceptance to God) without the Spirit, then

the Spirit is the first thing to be looked after, by him who would be truly and well-groundedly religious.

6. *The first way of meeting with the Spirit of God, is as a convincer of sin.* Here is the true entrance; this is the key that opens into life eternal; he that can receive it, let him. It is not by soaring aloft into high imaginations and forms of worship; but by coming down to this low thing. This is the first and most proper work of the Spirit of God toward fallen man, whereby he makes way toward the writing of God's law in the heart; namely, to convince of sin. And where should man look first to meet with him, but in his first work upon him? When Christ promised the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, he said this concerning him, "that he should convince the world of sin." John xvi. 8. They who are created anew in Christ, and become his disciples, receive comfort from the Spirit; but what is he to the world? Or how may they feel any operation of him? Why he is to them a convincer of sin, and they may find him checking them for, and convincing them of, their sins. So that the great work for man, while he lies in the darkness (for when he is translated into light he will be easy) is to distinguish the movings and stirrings of the Spirit of God. And this is the best way for man in this state to know them by: that which discovers that which is evil, THAT is is good. That which discovers that which is spiritually evil, THAT must needs be spiritually good; for evil is darkness, and cannot make itself manifest. That which discovers that which is undoubtedly pure, and inclines to it, THAT must needs be of God. Now to know this, and be joined unto it, is a joining of the creature unto God, by somewhat of him that comes from his Spirit, and so is a true beginning of life eternal.

7. *That whereby the Spirit of God convinceth of sin, is his light shining in the conscience.* Fallen man is darkness; the light shines in the darkness, and shows man the evil, which otherwise would lie covered in him. Man fell from God, lost the image of God, and became wholly darkness; but the Spirit of God is light, and shines in the darkness, and

strives with man to reduce him back again to that light from which he fell. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," &c. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Where did the apostles and Christians in those days meet with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ? God shined in their hearts. He that made the light to shine out of the dark deep, Gen. i. 2. by his Spirit, he by the same Spirit made the light of the knowledge of life shine in their dark hearts; and there it is also that the work of conviction is wrought by the same Spirit. He that perfects the good work in the heart, the same is he that begins it there; and his beginning is, by reproving and convincing of sin, and so turning the heart from it unto God, and unto the obedience of that righteousness which he makes manifest. And he that meeteth not with the Spirit in the beginning of his work, or slinketh back, and goeth not on with him, but smothereth his reproofs, not forbearing that, or parting with that for which he is reproved, is never like to meet with him in the end. And then it will be too late for him to blame that religion wherein there was only a dead form, but not the living power of God. He that will come to life eternal, must be translated out of his dead understanding, and all his dead ways and worships, which please that understanding, into a living principle, and keep in that principle; and then he shall know life indeed, and the true food of that life, and the true worship and service from that life, and the reward belonging to all.

8. *That this light convincing of sin, shineth in every conscience.* "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good," Micah vi. 8. "The life," which was in Christ, was "the light of men." John i. 4. Christ is "the light of the world." John viii. 12. God, as he loved the world, so he manifested his love to the world, by sending his light into it, to enlighten every man that cometh into the world, that with the light they may see his Son; and as many as receive him, to them he gives power to become the sons of God. As God would have "all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the

truth;" so he hath given that light to all, which may bring to the knowledge of the truth which saveth. He is "the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." John i. 9. "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men," &c. As the enemy got possession of every man's heart, by filling it with darkness; so Christ pursueth, and seeketh to dispossess the enemy, by the light which he sendeth after him into every man. And this is the condemnation of man: not that he wants a light to witness against, and draw him from the enemy; but that he loves the enemy, and chooseth to be one with the enemy; but hates light, and turns from it. John iii. 10, 20. He hearkens to the reasonings of his mind against the light, and so smothers and chokes it; but does not turn to the light, to have all the reasonings of his mind subdued by it, and subjected to it.

9. *The true way to life eternal, is by believing in the light of the Spirit, which shineth in the conscience.* Man is in darkness, which keeps him in death; and there is no way to come out of the death, but by coming out of the darkness; and there is no way to come out of the darkness, but by following that light which discovers it, and calls forth from it; and he that doth follow that, cannot remain in the darkness, but must needs come out. There is an evil principle in man, calling for evil; and there is a good principle calling from the evil to the good: now he that followeth the good, cannot follow the evil, but departs from it. "I am the light of the world (saith Christ); he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii. 12. But this is that which undoes man; he loves the darkness, he loves the world, the course of the world, the worships of the world; he loves his own understanding, and his own will, and so hates that light which crosseth these, and which would teach him, by the denial of them, to crucify that nature from whence they spring, and to which they are suitable. And from hence it comes to pass (the love to sin within being strong, and Satan, the strong man, keeping the house) that the motions of God's Spirit are easily over-

borne, either by reasonings of the understanding, or by perverseness of the will: but if any man durst trust himself to them, he would quickly find of what nature they were, by the strong opposition of the strong man against them. It is indeed a strait and narrow way, into which no flesh can enter and walk; and yet it is the only way: for there is no life in God, no peace with God, while the enemy lives in the heart. But when the light is received and turned to, then the power begins to work, which slays the enemy in the heart; and that being done, there is no more war, but peace. Then the true peace, which passeth understanding, fills and refreshes the heart; whereas the peace which was in the soul before, was but the peace of the enemy, and will abide no longer than the enemy is suffered to keep possession quietly.

10. *That believing in the light of the Spirit, which shines in the conscience, unites the soul to God, and opens the springs of life to it.* Belief in darkness (which is unbelief towards God) disunited the soul, and closed up the springs of life from it. Belief in the light, which is sent to lead from the darkness, unites again, and opens the springs again. God is light; he dwells in the light, and there enjoys the fulness of life: and he gives a measure of his own light to draw from the darkness: and he who believes and follows this, is led by it unto God, from whom it came: and being come out of the darkness unto him, he begins again to feel the springs of life, the fresh springs of life, which are in him. He that believeth is come to the well of salvation, and draws living water out of it, and drinks of the living water continually, so that he can thirst no more; yea, "out of his belly flow rivers of living water." This is the fruit of the true faith; but this is not the fruit of the faith of the apostasy; but there the soul remains still disunited to God, and united to the darkness, and drinks not of the living streams, but drinks dead water. The fountain of pure life is not open to it: but the fountain of iniquity: and that blood which cleanseth and taketh away the sin is not known. There is only a dream of these things in the dark night of apostasy; by which dream the con-

science is a little quieted for the present; but when the witness awakes, and the light of the day shines, the soul, which is lean, will find itself in the hands of the enemy, in the bonds of sin, and feel that it never knew that power that could redeem it; but the subtle serpent deceived it with a name, instead of the thing.

This is the true way, the narrow way (I can, in the presence of the living God, set my seal to the truth of it) which it hath pleased God to discover, and make manifest again, after the long dark night of apostasy. And we come not to it by hearing or receiving any new notions or apprehensions of things; but by feeling that which puts an end to all creaturely notions and apprehensions; and we grow in it by the increase of that thing in us. The seed to which the promise was made, the seed which was before Abraham was, is felt, and his day is seen and rejoiced in; and by the light thereof the darkness is discovered, and the kingdom of darkness is assaulted. And as it daily falls in many particulars, so it shall at length fall in the general; and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign upon the earth, where sin and antichrist have long reigned, and kept him down. And though there be a great rage and outcry among the people and heathenish professors, yet the decree is gone forth, and Sion's king shall reign in the holy hill of Sion, and the hills and mountains shall melt before him, and the earth shall shake round about him.

Therefore gather yourselves together, muster up your strong forces, O ye several sorts of carnal professors! Let all your differences one against another fall, and join together against him who is against you all. Improve the serpent's wisdom, and form arguments out of the Scripture thereby with the utmost skill and understanding of flesh; get the kings, rulers, and magistrates of the earth on your side too; handle all the weapons of the flesh skilfully; dispute, reproach, revile, whip, stock, imprison, starve, nay, put to death. See if you can uphold your kingdom; for there is a mighty one come forth against you, who will take the

vineyard, the kingdom, the inheritance from you, and give it to another; and on you shall come that death and darkness, that misery and destruction, which you have put far from you; and slighted as the portion of others. Therefore consider your condition in the fear of the Lord; and if you feel not yourselves able to fight it out, make your peace betimes, and let your greatest crowns (your choicest wisdom and strength in the flesh) be laid down at the feet of Christ, at the lowest appearance of his light in the conscience. Let not the least check of his Spirit be slighted there; but esteemed above the highest notions of light that ye have gathered in, or can gather with your fleshly understandings.—And indeed it is no less than its due: for this which runs fresh from the Spirit is more living in itself, and more proper to that man's present estate to whom it comes, than whatever he himself by his understanding can gather from the letter.

There hath been a precious seed of God long stirring in this nation; but it hath been oppressed, and kept in bondage by the spirit of Pharaoh and his wise Egyptians, who would subject it to their laws and worships, and not let Israel go out of Egypt at God's call, to worship him in Spirit and truth; but would keep him in forms and ways of man's invention. The Lord hath poured out his plagues upon this spirit, and more and more wrought out the liberty of his people: but as the plagues cease, this spirit hardens itself, and essays the reducing of Israel into bondage again. And as Pharaoh renews the bondage of Israel, so God renews the plagues on Pharaoh and his Egyptians. Pharaoh hath a stubborn will, and a great wisdom and power, and is loth to let Israel go; but the Lord also is wise and strong, and hath a will more righteous than Pharaoh's; and by his wisdom and strength will he effect his will, and Pharaoh's shall not stand.

Who is such a stranger in Israel, that hath not observed, that as God began to raise up the seed in this nation, and call it into liberty, so the spirit of the wise Egyptians rose up against it, exclaiming of error, heresy, blasphemy, new ways, new lights, &c.? And doubtless many tares have

sprung up; but the aim of the enemy was not so much to pluck up the tares, as to destroy the one good seed of wheat. Herod did not aim at killing all the infants in Bethlehem; but he would rather kill them all, than have Christ live. What preaching on the one hand! What running to the magistrate on the other hand! And all to destroy this young babe. When any different way of worship did appear, as of Independency, Anabaptism, or of seeking and waiting for the truth, how did they make an head against them, and cry out against them, for fear the young child should be born and appear there! And now they see their own image brought forth there, they are at peace with them. And having discovered that, where no part of the image or mark can be received, but there is another nature in life and truth brought forth, and no form without life will go down; now they knew where to shoot all their darts; now they knew against whom to invent and speak all manner of evil, and against whom to direct all their envy, rage, and out-cries, and to prepossess all sorts of persons everywhere, with all manner of prejudices, that the truth may not spread anywhere, but be opposed everywhere. And all persons' minds there, are so filled beforehand with the venom of the serpent, that truth cannot come anywhere, but it finds the enmity already stirred up, and prepared to withstand it.

This is a new way, a new light, says one; we knew a religion before this came up, and we will keep to that, let who will run after these new sects and ways. A natural light, the old light of nature, saith another, or the corrupted light of Adam, which hath run along through all his posterity. Another outcry is, that it makes the Scriptures void and useless. Others cry out, that it teaches things contrary to the Scriptures; that it sets up free-will; that it leads to a covenant of works; that it breaks down relations, laws, governments; takes away due respect from magistracy and superiors, and turns the world upside down. Thus the worldly spirit is everywhere up in arms, and a zeal kindled everywhere to keep it out of every heart, and out of every place and country.

Now these are not real things; but such kind of slanders and reproaches as always have attended truth. The prophets of God, Christ, and his apostles, though they have been spoken well of afterwards, yet they have ever been hated, spoken ill of, and persecuted by the generation of professors of their age. The Scribes and Pharisees could not with so great advantage have persecuted Christ and his apostles, without a seeming zeal for the law and prophets; and yet it was the same spirit that so vehemently cried up the law, the prophets, the ordinances of Moses, that persecuted the Spirit and life in Christ and his apostles, from whence the law, the prophets, and ordinances came. And thus it is at this day; though that spirit is as blind now as it was then, and cannot see through its own cover; though it be as weak and narrow as theirs was. The guilty chargeth the innocent, that it might hide its own guilt, and keep its covering. The guilty Jews, and the guilty Scribes and Pharisees, charged the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, that they might not be found guilty by them, and have their formal covering rent from them. And thus it is at this day; truth is risen to make manifest men's false coverings, and the guilt and hypocrisy that lie hid underneath. Now to save themselves, they are prepared beforehand to lay that charge against truth, which truth hath against them.

Search thine heart, resist not the light, thou that hast charged the truth with any of these things, and thou wilt find it thine own condition. The truth is no new light, or new way; and they that hold it forth, do not hold forth any new way, or new light; but it is thou that hast left the good old light, the good old way, which was before the apostasy, and hast fallen in with some new light, some new way, invented and set up since the apostasy. It is thou again that settest up the natural light, the fallen wisdom, the wisdom which is out of the life, and in enmity with the life; with this thou feedest that understanding which is to be brought to nought; and when thou hast done this thyself, then thou callest the spiritual light, wherewith God hath pursued it in all ages, a natural light. It is thou that with

this wisdom searching into the Scriptures, and gathering the oldness of the letter into the old understanding, makest the Scriptures void and useless to thy soul, and canst not meet with that life and power which they speak of; but art still alive in thy sins, and dead unto God; and then thou criest out against that which comes to discover this to thee, and to bring thee out of the dead knowledge into the life of the Scriptures; thou criest out against this, as if this made the Scriptures useless. And when thou hast set up a whole body of knowledge, religion, and worship, quite contrary to the Scriptures, which the truth comes to make manifest, then Cain's nature riseth up in thee, and thou takest up Cain's weapons, and fain wouldst thou kill thy brother, because his sacrifice in the faith testifies against thine, which is out of the faith, and contrary to the true testimony of the Scriptures. Again; for a free-will and a covenant of works, thou hast set up a religion in the old will and works; not according to the new covenant of life, but according to the old covenant of death. And by this thou preachest that will to be free, which is in bonds; and settest up the works of man's righteousness, and conformity to the letter, for the works of the new covenant. And for governments and laws, that which is according to God, which is a terror to the evil, and a praise to them that do well; that which is liberty to the just, and a curb to the unjust; this thou art against, and criest out daily for the turning of the magistrate's sword against the innocent, because they are a light to discover thy deeds of darkness, which are out of the light, and disturb thy peace and thy settlement in that which is fleshly, and of man, and not of God. So for relations, and honor to magistrates; the transgressing nature hath brought up a wrong thing, a fleshly thing, an honor and a duty which are of the flesh, and please the flesh, and are not according to God. And this is not honor indeed; not an honor that will stand; not an honor that will be justified in the sight of God; but it is a shame to them that give it, and a shame to them that receive it; discovering that they are servants to the flesh, giving to and receiving from the

fleshly part that which the fleshly part (which crucifies the life) calls for, and is pleased with.

All that the light doth to these things, is to discover and condemn them: and the end of its discovery is, that they might be removed, and truth and righteousness brought in the stead of them. But man's evil heart, which is the cause of them, cries out against the light, as if the light brought them. Whereas if man could be quiet and still, and suffer the work of the light upon him, he would find that the same light which discovereth them, would also purge them away, and leave neither root nor branch of iniquity, either in men's hearts, or in relations, or families, or towns, or cities, or laws, or governments; and there would be no want of honor. Now though the serpent's wisdom is irreconcilable, and that understanding which stands there cannot be satisfied, but must be confounded and brought to nought, 1 Cor. i. 19. yet because underneath all this there is a simplicity in some, which is betrayed; for the relief of that, somewhat further may be spoken in answer to these things.

Object. 1. To the first objection, that this is a new way, or new light, I answer:

Ans. It is new indeed to them who have lain long in the apostasy, and set up another light; but it is not new in itself, but the same that was in the beginning; yea, and before the beginning also. Christ was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and the light that comes from him is like him; that also is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It was the same under the law, the same before the law, the same since the law. As the darkness all along hath been the same, so the light all along hath been the same also. It was the same in the Jews, and the same in the Gentiles. It was this God expected obedience to from the Jews; and the prophet (in the name of the Lord) disdains their sacrifices, and brings them to this; Micah vi. 8. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Their eye was upon sacrifices and oil; but the prophet points them to

that which would bring them to the right sacrifice, and to the true oil. And the Gentiles, so far as they were obedient to this, were accepted, and excused in their own consciences; the faithful witness whereof is of God, and will stand in the day of Christ. Rom. ii. 15, 16. "That which was from the beginning," saith the apostle John, "declare we unto you." 1 John i. 1. And "this is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." verse 5. And the end of preaching this message, is to draw out of the darkness into the light; to bring men to the feeling of the light of God in them, and so to union with it; which being turned to, draws out of the darkness. God, who is light, is nigh to every man, who is darkness; though man's sense is very thick, and can hardly see or feel him. And a light from him shines in man's darkness; but man's darkness comprehends it not. So that this light is not new in itself, but only new to the old spirit, which hath long lain hid in the region of darkness and death, and hath not known the light of life.

Object. 2. That this is a natural light, or the light of old Adam's nature.

Ans. It is in one sense a natural light; it is of the nature of him from whom it comes; of the nature of God, and of his Christ, whom it appears for: but it is not of the nature of corrupt Adam, whom it always reproved, and against whom it still stands a witness, and condemns all corruption. Man is darkness; and when Christ comes to redeem him, he finds him darkness: and Christ finds no light in him to help him to discover sin to him; but all the discoveries of sin that are made in the heart, are by the light of Christ, and not by any light of man's nature. The Lord is the searcher of the heart, and he searcheth it with his own candle, and not with any left in man's nature. Man fell into darkness, and knew not where he was; but the Lord cometh after him with his candle, and discovereth his state to him. It is the light from which man fell, and against which he sins, that is alone able to make his disobedience manifest to him. "We know" saith the apostle, "that the

law is spiritual; but I am carnal." Rom. vii. 14. The law is the lowest part of the light; and yet that is spiritual, and of Christ's nature, and not of Adam's nature; "we know it," saith the apostle. Such as know the nature of that which manifests sin, know it to be spiritual. It is the fallen man from the light, the man in the darkness, that calls the light darkness: but that which discovers the darkness, and reproves the darkness, and wars against the darkness, is not darkness, but the light of life. And those who are spiritual, and feel the nature and power of it in their spirits, know it to be so. But man hath set up a light of his own; hath raised up a light by his study and invention, in the strength of the fallen wisdom: and now setting up this for light, he must needs call the true light darkness, as the Pharisees did Christ.

Object. 3. That it makes the Scriptures void and useless.

Ans. It came from the Spirit that gave forth the Scriptures; it is of the same nature with the light that shone in them that gave forth scriptures; it speaks the same thing with scriptures, it leads to the same thing, and it opens and witnesses to the words which the scriptures speak; and so it brings the scriptures, which have been long abused, into their true use. Indeed it puts an end to the corrupt use of scriptures, to man's inventing and forming things out of them, and brings them into their true use and service. It takes the scriptures out of man's hand, who hath slain the life by them, and puts them into the hands of the Spirit, who makes the words again pure and quick and living; purging away man's defiled and dead conceivings and interpretations of them.

A man must know the Spirit, come to the Spirit, be joined to, and be in union with the Spirit, before he can have the true understanding of the scriptures. The scriptures of truth are the words of God, or various expressions of his mind; which he that searcheth into, before he hath his Spirit, cannot know: and so man, in this state, can only guess and imagine at things, but cannot see the truth. And from hence it is that so many sects and heaps are sprung up

in the world, according to the variety of their imaginations. One sort of men cry, This is the way, this is the truth, this is the church, this is the worship. Another sort cry, This is not it; that is superstition and error; but this is it: and so a third and fourth, &c. So about scriptures, one saith this is the meaning; another saith it is not so, but this is the meaning. The Papists say, the church must judge of the meaning of scriptures; and the Protestants, who take more scope, how do they doubt and differ, and oppose one another, about the interpretation of scriptures! Which plainly shows that they do not plow with the right heifer; for then there would be unity and certainty. They let their own reasonings and imaginations loose, and there is no foundation of certainty. But had they waited for the Spirit to begin with, and gone on no further than he opened to them, all these doubts and dissensions would have been choked in the birth, or womb, or not have come so far as either birth or womb. Yet do I not altogether deny the reading of scriptures, even in this state, if man read with fear and trembling: not setting up his own understanding, or the understanding of any man else; but waiting for the Spirit, which can alone give him an understanding to receive the true knowledge. But this I dare boldly affirm, that men's reading of the scriptures in their own wisdom and self-confidence (or confidence of what interpretation others have given) doth them no good at all, but much harm, tending to the building up of that which God will again destroy. But he that begins with the Spirit of God, giving himself up to that light which comes from him, comes to true union with God, and to the feeling of his life, and so to a true growth and knowledge of the Spirit of God, whereby he comes to know and understand the scriptures, which came from the same Spirit; and hereby also he comes to be able to measure the deceit of his own spirit, which formerly led him aside, and also to see and measure the spirits of deceivers. But he that is in the deceit, in the imagination, out of the true knowledge, he cannot know the deceit of his own spirit, or

the spirits of deceivers; but calls the truth deceit, and the deceit truth.

Object. 4. That this light teaches things contrary to the Scriptures.

Ans. That light which comes from the same Spirit which the Scriptures came from, cannot teach things contrary to the Scriptures. But man, who hath taken the tools of his understanding, and formed images and likenesses out of the Scriptures (I mean invented meanings and senses, and judged these agreeable to the Scriptures), he must needs judge that which is contrary to these, as contrary to the Scriptures: whereas the truth is one in itself, and agreeth with whatsoever is true in this age, or in former ages; and differs only from that which is not true. And we know that there is that true unity with that Spirit from which the Scriptures came, and with the Scriptures, and with one another, in that light which the wisdom of man cannot but despise, as hath not been in any age since the apostasy until now.

Object. 5. That this sets up free-will. When persons are exhorted to embrace the light, to let in the light, and told that condemnation comes for not believing or receiving the light, then they cry out, Can man believe? Can man receive the light? Hath man free-will?

Ans. The will of man is bound; but there is liberty, power, and freedom in the light which visits man, and comes to unbind and save him. And man feels this power, tastes of this liberty, feels somewhat disengaging him from the evil, and drawing him from it: but he being in love with the evil, draws back from the drawing, shutting his ears against the wisdom of the light, and opening his ears to the reasonings of the serpent; and then the liberty and power which were in the light, withdraw with the light, and the bonds are strengthened upon him. And this is the condemnation; not that there was a want of power from God, but that he chose the power of the enemy, not loving the light, wherein the power of life lay. God knows the state of man in the fall, and knows the strength of the enemy; and the Saviour that he sends hath sufficient power against him;

and the light that the Saviour sends is stronger than the darkness, and can overcome the darkness, and cannot be overcome by the darkness. And if thou join with the darkness, and wilt not yield to the drawings of the Father, but yield up thyself to the drawings and reasonings of the darkness; yet the strength of the light remains in itself. And though for the present thou hast struck it down and slain it; yet it will rise up a strong and living witness against thee, and the darkness to which thou hast joined. When a man goes from the light, he goes into the will voluntarily; then takes and chooses in the flesh. When a man follows the light, the will of the flesh dieth in him, another will riseth up, and chooseth for him. There is the true liberty.

But as for your speaking of free-will, ye do not know what ye speak of: for the will, with the freedom of it, either stands in the image and power of him that made it, or in a contrary image and power. While it is in the image and power of him that made it, it is free unto good, and not to evil; while it is in the image and power of him who corrupted it, it is free unto evil, and not to good. The will is not of itself, but stands in another, and is servant to that in whom it stands, and there its freedom is bound and comprehended. For there is no middle state between both, wherein the will stands of itself, and is free to both equally; but it is a servant, and under the command of one of these powers. If it be under the command of sin, of the power of darkness, it is free from righteousness; and if it be under the command and power of righteousness, it is free from sin; but such a free-will as men commonly speak of, is mere imagination, and hath no foundation in the true state of things.

And this may answer another objection, which lies as a great block in the way of many, who feel a conviction, but are withheld from obedience, under a pretence of wanting power; whereas the power lies in that light which convinceth, and is received in the obedience, and in the cross. As the power of the enemy creeps in, in hearkening to him; so the power of truth is received in hearkening to, and receiv-

ing the reproofs of truth. That which checks the evil, that which stands against the mind, smiting it in its course of vanity and pleasure in the fallen state, in that is the power. That comes from the power, goes forth in the power, and the power is in it, and cannot be severed from it. So he that lets that in, lets in the power; and he that shuts that out, shuts out the power. And in this state a man may complain all his days for want of power, and not meet with it: for how can he, when he refuseth it in the way wherein the power seeks him, and waits for it in a way wherein it is not to be found? The appearance of the power at first is small, and contemptible to the eye of the fleshly wisdom; and it is not received in any such great, overpowering way (though that also is known afterward) as man is apt to expect; but all lies in one little seed, where the day of small things is known. The light, the life, the power, the purity, the wisdom, &c., lie hid there; and in receiving that little thing, all is received; and in the growth of that, all grows up. But by being tempted by the enemy to neglect this, and wait for some great power and appearance of God, the soul is held in the bonds of iniquity, and kept from the life, as strongly as by the grossest form.

Object. 6. That this sets up a covenant of works; for a man is bid to do, bid to obey the light; and when he does, when he obeys, he has peace; and when he obeys not, he has not peace.

Ans. This sets not up the works of the law; but it leads through the works of the law to the righteousness of faith. "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Rom. vii. The apostle was alive in his worship and Jewish state, till the law came: but when the law came, it slew that life that he had there, and he became dead, both to that life by which he lived before, and to the law that slew him; and then there arose up a life in him which answered the law, and could fulfil it, and lead to a righteousness beyond it: and then his life and righteousness were not any works of the law, but of faith, and in the faith. Gal. ii. 19, 20. But yet there is no passing to this, but through the administra-

tion of the law in the heart, in the hand of the Mediator. And when the life is risen and received, yet even then there is no peace but in the obedience to the life. The peace lives in that which brings the peace; and if there be a departing from that, there is a departing from the peace. Any fleshly thought, any fleshly motion, as it is out of the life, so it is out of the peace; and the mind joining to it, feels the death and trouble of it. Thus said the apostle, Gal. vi. 15, 16. "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them." The peace comes to the new creature, and to man walking according to the rule of the new creature: and the condemnation is not to them that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. viii. 1. But if there be an hearkening to the flesh, and a fulfilling the unrighteousness thereof in any thing, God is righteous, and he cannot speak peace to the wicked, or to him that joins with the wicked. Therefore, where there is true peace, there must be a coming from the wicked nature, and a living out of the wicked nature, in him who is the life, the righteousness, the peace. I know there have been curious fabrics in men's minds about the covenant of grace; but they have not known the nature of it, and of the works that flow from it, and so are apt to call the works of the new life, springing from the covenant of life, the works of the old covenant. But wisdom is justified of her children, and they know her birth: and in the true light the true nature of things is seen, and the true name and description given, which he that is out of the light cannot receive, but stumbles at: and the wiser he is, in his own devised way and knowledge of things, the more stumbling-blocks he has, and the more he stumbles.

Object. 7. and last. That it breaks down relations, laws, governments; takes away due respect from magistracy and superiors, and turns the world upside-down.

Ans. Iniquity hath reigned, unrighteousness hath wound itself into, and twisted about every thing. And now the truth comes to discover and purge out the iniquity; the

strong man, who hitherto hath kept possession of the house, cries out, as if the destruction of the thing were aimed at. Nay, it is only the evil that is aimed at; but the thing itself is not to be destroyed, but to be set free from the evil, and preserved. Relations are good, laws are good, governments are good, of God; but the unrighteousness of flesh, the pleasing of the flesh by the pretence of these, the giving liberty to the unjust, this is not good. And is it not thus in relations, in government, in the execution of laws? If a man will be fleshly, and walk in them according to the flesh, the law takes not hold of him, his relations are not offended at him; but if he come once to feel the power of God, and withdraw from the evil, and stand a witness for God against it, then relations, and powers of the earth, and laws, all strike at him: and the reason is, because they are in union with the evil, and so cannot bear the rending of the evil from the thing. And from hence it is, that wherever the gospel comes in power, it kindles a flame round about, setting father against son, and son against father, husband against wife, and wife against husband, &c. Yea, it goes closer than so; it sets one part in man against another; and the fight is very bitter and sharp, till one of these be subdued, and then there is peace; fleshly peace, if the wise, fleshly part prevail; spiritual peace, if the weak, foolish thing (to the world) in the heart, which is of God, prevail.

And for honor to magistrates and superiors, it is not denied; but fleshly honor, corrupt honor, honor from the fleshly part, and to the fleshly part, this cannot but be denied by them which are of God. That which is born of God is not of this world, nor can it give honor to that which is of this world; but it honors all men in the Lord. Whatever is of God in magistracy, it honors; whatever is in superiority according to God (as a father, a husband, a master,) it honors with true honor. Christ, the only begotten of God, could not receive honor of men, nor could he give honor to men: and he saith to the Jews, How can ye believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only? The receiving

of honor from man cannot stand with the true faith (when ye know the faith ye will know it): he that respecteth persons, commiteth sin, and is a transgressor against the law of faith, which leads to the life which stands in God,out of the world's honors, worships, customs, and whatever else which is not of faith, but of the world. Mordecai did not bow to Haman; nay, he sat in the king's gate, where Haman was to pass, and yet did not stand up, move, or bow to him. What an affront was this to that high, proud, lofty spirit! and yet it was of the Lord. This was a type (as the Jewish state in general was typical) of what God would do in the world, and is now doing. The Lord hath raised up Mordecai's nature, and he hath discovered Haman's nature, and hath given the command to Mordecai, that he should not bow to Haman. And if ye could search your hearts, ye would find, that it is not that of God in you which is offended for want of that which ye call honor; but the Hamanish spirit, the fleshly pride and loftiness, which the Lord will lay low; and he alone will be exalted in this day of his mighty power; and man shall only be honored as he comes from him, and as he is found in him: but the honor which the fleshly part hath sought and gained in the transgression, shall fall with the transgressor, whom the Lord hath furbished his sword to smite.

And for turning the world upside-down, it is acknowledged: the power of the Lord is come forth to do it. That which is high, that which is wise, that which is strong, that which is rich, that which is full, that which is fat, the Lord will lay low, make foolish, weak, poor, empty, lean; for it lies in wickedness. He will feed the fat and strong cattle with that judgment which shall make them lean and weak. And the humble, the foolish, the weak, the poor, the empty, the lean, he will raise up, and make wise, and strong, and rich, and full, and fat, with the true honor, the true wisdom, the true strength, the true riches, the sure and living mercies of David; who sets his feet on the top of the high places of the earth; of whom Christ came according to the flesh.

Thus I have in plainness of heart, and plainness of speech,

set the truth and the error before you, and lent my hand toward the removing of some blocks which lay in your way, in love and pity to your souls. Now if any, in the reading of this, feel a secret touch upon their hearts, startling them, and giving some testimony to the truth, though very small, and through a thick, dark covering, there is that to which I speak; there is the witness within the veil; and there is the testimony rising up, which leads to life, if given heed to. Keep to this, and this will prick and wound, judge and condemn the contrary nature, though ever so strong. And when it doth prick and wound, keep the wound fresh and open, as thou lovest thy life, till thou meet with the true healer. For the false prophet will rise up in thee, and fill thee with reasonings, and perhaps multitudes of promises and comforts from scripture, skinning over the wound, and crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. And when thou hast thus got over the trouble, then the false prophet, which brought thee this peace, will stir thee up against the witness, exalting the wisdom and reasonings of the flesh, and making merry with thee over the witness, which witnessed against thee and him, and over the trouble that came thereby; and this will bring thee to that hardness of heart which is for destruction. And when thou hast slain the witness in thyself, and exalted thy fleshly reason and understanding over it, then the false prophet which seduced thee will kindle a zeal in thee against the witness in others; and thou wilt prove a persecutor of the life, under the name of deceit, error, heresy, and blasphemy; whereas thou thyself art fallen into the deceit, into the error from the life, and into the blasphemy against it, and art in Cain's nature, and wouldst fain be handling of Cain's weapons to destroy it.

Therefore take heed of the fleshly wisdom; take heed of thine own understanding; take heed of thy reasoning or disputing; for these are the weapons wherewith the witness is slain. That wisdom must be destroyed, and that understanding brought to nought, and thou become a child, and learn as a child, if ever thou know the things of God. "Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the

disputer of this world?" Did they ever, from the beginning of the world to this day, attain the knowledge of the things of God? Where are the councils? Where are the great convocations? Where are the synods? Where are the assemblies of divines? What is become of them all? What have they done? Have they been ever able to lead out of the apostasy from the truth into the truth again? Nay: that wisdom is cursed; it is of the earth, and fixed in the earth, and is the grand enemy to the wisdom that is from above: and where that wisdom stands, there is no entrance for the other. This made it so hard for this sort of persons, in all ages, to own truth. *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge hath perverted thee.* This made the whorish spirit so able to use sorceries and enchantments from the life in all ages. And it is easier for publicans, harlots, drunkards, swearers, and all sorts of sinners to own truth, and enter into life, than for these. For it is easier to empty them of their profaneness, than it is to empty these of their settled, conceited religion and devotion: and yet these, with their religion and devotion, cannot enter, no more than the other with their profaneness. Ye have a knowledge, a righteousness, an hope, a faith, &c., founded by your pretence to scriptures. Who can shake down these, say you? And yet these must fall, before ye can build upon, and grow up in, the life that the scriptures came from. For the scriptures were not given for men to gather out of, and lay a foundation of faith there, by their own wills; but to discover and testify of the foundation. And he that comes thither, and is built there, knows the truth; not because the scriptures say so, but because he feels the thing, is founded upon the thing, grows up in the thing, and the thing in him, whereof the scripture speaks. And this knowledge shall abide, and this faith, and this righteousness, and this holiness, and this redemption; whereas the other is but a name, put upon that which is not the thing.

These are precious and faithful words (though through a vessel weakened, and weak beyond measure); and happy is he that hath an ear to hear them; but woe from the Lord to

that eye that is closed, to that ear that is shut, to that heart that is hardened, in the inventions and imaginations of man's fleshly mind, against the truth of God. Let the witness of God in thee stir and speak, it shall answer me now: but if thou, through the strength of the flesh, and the vain imaginations which thou huggest in thy heart, stifle the voice of it now, yet I know it shall answer me one day; but then it will be too late for thee to hear it.

The Lord is now gentle and tender, pursuing thee with his love, and following thee up and down with his light. And though thou run from him into sin and transgression, and hearken to the wisdom of the flesh; yet his voice comes after thee to reclaim thee: and if thou wilt hear, and but yield thyself to him, he will not put thee to do any thing; but subdue all thy enemies for thee; yea, he will slay the serpentine wisdom in thee, with all its inventions, and dash all the children of Babylon against the stones, without pity to them, though with great pity to thee. But if thou refuse, and choose the pleasure of the flesh, and the gross flesh-pots of Egypt, and turn thine ear from his voice, giving way to the reasonings of the flesh, and keeping down the witness, the day of wrath and severity, which all the scriptures have spoken of, will come, and thou wilt have thy portion with hypocrites, who, in all ages, have covered themselves with a form of religion, pleasing to the flesh and the world; but have withheld their hearts from the power of life. Therefore prize the love of God to thee in giving thee this warning; and be not uncircumcised in heart and ears, as this generation of professors have always been; but let Christ reign in thy heart, and let him trample all man's invented forms of knowledge and worship under his feet, and give up thyself to be led by him into the true knowledge and worship in the spirit and in the truth.

And now you who find your hearts touched and convinced of the truth, and find any desire kindled in you after the living God, and a hungering and thirsting after his righteousness, take notice of these three things, which I have upon my heart to say to you, by way of advice:

1. *Know and take up thy cross*, the cross of Christ, the daily cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is that which crosseth the natural; and this is the power of God to deliver from the natural. How should the earthly understanding, the earthly will, the earthly affections, with the elementary nature (which have had their swing in the earth) be crucified and slain, but by the cross of Christ? He, therefore, that will have a religion to please himself in any thing, must not come hither; and he who, after he is come hither, admitteth of any thing pleasing to the earthly, and starteth from the cross, which would deny and turn from it; so far as he doeth so, he goeth backward, and not forward. It is no wonder that there is such an enmity in all sorts against the truth; for it striketh at their life, yea, at the very root of their life. If there were any new way or form of religion held forth, men's understandings and affections might by degrees be wrought up to it, and find pleasure in it; but this is direct death to that nature and spirit that hath lived in any form of religion, and to the whole course of that nature and spirit; yet through this death, the true life springs up, in those who receive the strokes of it. Therefore be willing, and learn to die daily, and bring every thing which is contrary to Christ to the cross. Deny self in every thing, take up the cross in every thing, follow Christ in every thing. This is the way which Christ himself prescribes to become his disciples by: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me." Seek not ease in the flesh, no, not in the least; but take up the cross every day, in every thing, till the earthly be slain; till the wisdom and strength of the flesh be wholly subdued, and then the wisdom and power of God will become natural.

2. *Keep to the sense*, keep to the feeling; beware of the understanding, beware of the imagining, conceiving mind. These cannot be for God, nor bring forth any thing for God, until they be new cast, and new moulded. The one seed of life lies in the invisible, in the hidden man of the heart, among multitudes of seeds of death; all which have their growth up into, and strength in, the corrupted natural. So

that this seed cannot shoot up into any part of the natural, but the other seeds shoot up with it, and endeavor to choke it. Now the other seeds spring up two ways, either in a way of opposition against the true seed, or in a way of similitude. There cannot be a good thought, or desire, or beam of light, enter into the understanding or will, but multitudes of evil thoughts, evil desires, or fleshly reasonings against it, will spring up with it, and strive to overbear it. And if the enemy be at length overcome, by the power of God fighting with him and vanquishing him, then he hath his garment of light; then he brings in thoughts and desires, and motions like God's, which easily pass for good, if the soul keep not close upon the watch. The forward understanding is apt presently to own them, and the forward will to embrace, and the forward affections to let themselves forth into them, until the soul come to feel a loss in life, and miss the power and presence of God, and find the enemy strong again. Yea, the enemy hath yet a more subtle way; namely, to raise motions like the motions of God's spirit, and suddenly, before the light hath given the discerning of them, to raise oppositions and reasonings against them; that so by the opposition, which is manifestly evil, the motion itself, which is also evil (though good in appearance), might be the less suspected, and swallowed. Now the only way of safety is to keep out of the natural, whereof the enemy hath possession, and where his strength lies, and to keep in the sense and feeling of the invisible seed, and only to come forth with him into the natural, in that sense and feeling. And when he comes, he will come with strength, above the strength that the enemy hath in the natural, and by degrees conquer him. But by no means rest or abide in the natural, but retire with the Lord (who will not dwell there until it be cleansed) into the resting-place. These words may be hard to you at present; but hereafter (as you come into the exercise) you will feel them. And this is the reason why the formal and outward part of religion doth so commonly eat out the life, because things there are suitable to, and exercise, that part wherein the strength of the enemy

lies; and there can never be perfect freedom and safety until that part be subdued, and all that belongs to that part removed. The Lord is risen to shake, that the kingdom which cannot be shaken may appear; and happy are they who are shaken by his hand in all that is outward, and established in the inward life, power, and rest, which remaineth for ever, and cannot be shaken.

3. *Wait patiently the Lord's leisure.* Be not hasty after life and salvation in the will of the flesh; but leave the Lord to choose his own season for the showering down of his mercy and blessing. The Lord will not presently entertain that spirit which hath adulterated from him (prostituting itself to strangers, and defiling itself), into his bosom; but there must be a time of sorrow, a time of purifying and cleansing. The soul must know and feel that it hath been an evil thing and bitter, that it hath forsaken the Lord, the living fountain of living mercies, and hath sought life from vanities, and among dead idols. And all the idols must be thrown away, and the heart washed from that nature that ran after them, and become a pure virgin, to bear and bring forth the living seed; and by faithfulness to that seed, and waiting in that seed, in the Lord's season it shall receive the mercy and the blessing and the inheritance which belong to that seed. The husbandman does not presently reap, but waits long, even till the seed be grown up to maturity. Jacob, the type of the seed, said, "O Lord, I have waited for thy salvation." It is the election that obtains: it is to the seed, and for the seed's sake, that the mercy is bestowed; and there must be a waiting till the seed be grown up to age, and able to defend his portion from his elder brother, who otherwise would be ready to seize on it, and waste it upon harlots again. Therefore lie still, and bear the indignation of the Lord against that which hath transgressed, till he judge it, and deliver from it, and lead into the innocency and righteousness, and then he will find a time to arise, and plead the cause of the innocent, and give the crown of immortal life to that which he hath prepared for it. Therefore think not the race long, nor the battle hard, nor be weary of the afflic-

tions and chastisements in the way; but follow the Captain, the Guide, the Leader; whose light, strength, courage, and wisdom, will overcome all, and bring the soul which abides in it into his own throne.

Now as you thus wait, taking up the cross, and keeping in the feeling; so the corrupt natural, the mortal, wherein Satan's throne and power hath been, will wither, decay, and grow weak daily; and the tender plant of God, the immortal seed, will shoot up, and gather strength daily; and you will come to a will in God, and an understanding in God, and that which is of God will manifest itself; and you will come to know, and desire, and take delight in the things of God: then the soul, which is immortal, will come to hear, and receive, and feed on the immortal word, which is the bread of life, and which alone is able to preserve and nourish up to eternal life. Then ye will know what it is to tremble at this word, and to have all the powers of nature melt and fail before it. Then ye will know the faith which gives the victory, and the knowledge which lets into life, and the fear which keeps the heart clean, and the hope which anchors the soul immortal in the immortal God, and the patience which wins the crown. And so ye will come to witness the several conditions of the saints in scripture as ye grow up into them, and will not need men to give you meanings of scriptures from their brain-studies, and acquired arts and understandings; but will know the meaning from the thing itself in your own hearts, and hear the words from the living voice of that spirit that first spake them, who alone is able to interpret his own mind, and open the words which he himself spake. And then ye will know and love life and need no more exhortations to depart from all dead, corrupted, and corrupting forms, which ever were, and ever will be, enemies to, and betrayers of, the life. And so the peace of God, the rest of God, the true sabbath of God, the everlasting light and life of God, will come to be your own, and enjoyed by you, past all gainsaying or dispute in you; while the natural understanding in others is reasoning, contending and disputing about them, but can never know,

while they are from the thing within: for that mind is not the heir, nor must it inherit the kingdom of God.

POSTSCRIPT.

To those who have had a seriousness and depth in their religion, who could not sit down in empty forms and shadows of things, but have been pressing after the living substance; and missing of that, through error of judgment (the true eye being not fixed in the head), have come to a loss; and so are returned to, overgrown with, and hardened in, the old nature; and have taken up a pitiful rest and centre in the earth, having let fall the pursuit of their spirits after the true center of rest in the life: a word to such from the love in the life.

THERE was a spirit, soul, or image of God brought forth, and standing in his life, before the fall.

This soul was brought into death, under the burthen and bondage of corruption, out of its proper center and resting-place, by the fall.

Now as there is in this state a true loss, so there is in this spirit a sensibleness, a groaning under the burden, a feeling the bitterness of the captivity, and panting after redemption and restoration to its former state.

Now though the whorish part, which seduced from the life, make a great noise in the flesh about saints' words, and tempt to pleasures of the outward part, and pleasures in the mind, and draw into forms and religious worship, and frame deep centers of satisfaction in the understanding (perhaps from true openings of the life, quenching it), and so seek to quiet the soul, and still the cry; yet the lost state remaining, the soul being not truly redeemed, but a false rest taken up by the way, in the false part, this will fail, and the sense be again renewed in the day of trial and sore trouble. For the soul, by any imagination or notion or feeling of a centre in

the corrupt mind, cannot be healed or restored; but only by having the true life raised up again in it, and itself brought into its proper place and mansion in the fountain of life.

There have been, in the shakings of this nation, great stirrings, the seed springing up, and great opening to the seed; the spirit of prophecy hath been enlarged in us, above what many of our forefathers felt; but the way into the spring of life hath not been known, where the preservation is: so the whorish part, the corrupt part, the understanding which was not purified, and brought into subjection unto the truth, this harlot caught the openings and prophecies of the true spirit, conceived with them, and brought forth children to the flesh; bringing forth a more inward apprehension of things, a more spiritual kind of knowledge, as of God to be all, all to be good, and in God, and all sin and evil done away there, &c. And so such as centre here, form the fleshly mind, as it were, in him, as it was not known before. And now the redemption is forgotten, the pantings after life slain, and the flesh can lie down quiet in the unredeemed estate, and say, it is his will, it is good; and it can rest satisfied there in that will of his which is good. Thus the great abomination from the subtle flesh sprung up, which made many hearts desolate of very precious springings-up and buddings-forth of the true life and power of God.

But after this great loss and betraying of the life in them, it hath pleased God to raise it up in others, and to discover the hammer, the sword, the fire, which can knock down, cut down, and burn up this whorish part; and thither the whore is brought, when she comes to betray again, and the springings-up of life shrink back, and lie safe in the centre, while the whore is burning. And as the whore is burnt, the heir comes up, and the spirit (which is the portion of his inheritance) descends and rests upon him; and by this he is known; and that which is in union with him knows him. Therefore, if you will live, come to that hammer, that sword, that fire which flesh dreads, and let the flesh be delivered up to it: and do not despise the day of small things, waiting for some great appearance; but know it in its lowest knock:

for its power of redemption is as truly there, as in its greatest appearance. He that hath an ear let him hear, and his soul shall live.

Let those therefore whom this concerns consider their ways (as the grace that appeared to me hath taught me to do) and try this foundation, upon what they stand; and that they do not kill what is opened, and live in the slain openings, and so in the end become dark, airy, dry, withered, wheeling about, and turning into the earth, it becoming their rest and foundation again, and so losing the joys which formerly the opener did open. This, with me, many of you may witness; for whom my desire is, that they may also witness the return to that which then opened, and live in the opener, and be preserved by him from abusing his precious openings any more.

For though I had a true taste of life and power from God; yet not knowing the foundation, there could be no true building with it: and so the spirit was quenched, the life wasted, the portion spent upon harlots, the true bread lost, and chaff and husks fed upon, without the least satisfaction to the soul; the sense whereof, when the spirit of the Lord awakened me, did almost overwhelm me. Yea, the bands of death were so strengthened upon me, and the spirit of the world had taken such hold of me, that I found my return very difficult: yea, when living words of hope were mentioned to me, to draw me back to that principle of life from which I had gone out, I could receive nothing; but cry out, Impossible! impossible! impossible! I felt myself like a tree twice dead, plucked up by the roots, without the capacity of life, sense, or motion in the eternal being any more. But at length it pleased life to move in a low way in the midst of the powers of darkness in my heart; and by sinking low out of the wisdom, out of the reason, out of all high imaginations, and trusting myself to it; though dreadful strokes and oppositions were felt from the powers of darkness; yet at length there was some appearance of the deliverer, in such a poor, low, weak, despicable way, as could never have been welcomed, had not the soul been first

brought to distress, and the loftiness of the imaginary part brought down. And then coming out of that into the feeling, in another part, there was a seed sprung up into a child; and as the child grows, and feeds on the milk of the immortal Word, I live, and am strengthened in him, and daily weakened in that part which lived before. These are true words, from an honest heart, for the relief of those who may have been entangled in the same snare.

A TESTIMONY of great concernment to all those that call themselves Christians, but have not known the true church, of which alone the true Christian can be born.

THERE hath been a great war between the woman and her seed, and the harlot and her seed, from the beginning to this day; and they have each had their prevailings in the war. The woman and her seed have been made strong in God, to conquer some of the territories of death, and to set up their life in the world. Thus, in the Jewish state, God prepared a heaven and earth for the woman and her seed, and when that heaven and earth were shaken, he prepared a more glorious heaven and earth in the Christian state. Now no sooner were the church and her seed seated in either of these, but the dragon made war against her, and in the war had power given him to recover her seat from her. Thus the devil got possession of the Jewish state, so that there was no room for the true church there, but all was in idolatry and corruption; and the Lord was not served by their ceremonies, by their sacrifices, by their sabbaths, by their new moons, by their temple-worships, &c., but the devil. And the devil also got possession of the heaven and the earth in the Christian state; so that in their ordinances, and in their worships, in their duties, in those which they call their churches, God hath not been worshipped in the truth, but the devil, for these many ages. For mark: who was it that got into the temple of God? Was it not antichrist? Was it not the spirit of Satan? 2 Thess. ii. 4. And

who was it that was worshipped in all the world, that had power given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations, and whom all that dwell upon the earth worship? Was it not the dragon? Rev. xiii. 7, 8. Did not all the world wonder after the beast, and worship the dragon which gave power unto the beast? ver. 3, 4. of that chapter. The woman was assaulted here, her strong holds taken from her, so that she could not stay safe in that heaven and earth which God had made for her; therefore there was another place prepared for her by God, in the wilderness, and she had wings of an eagle given her to fly thither; but the dragon got into, and held possession of, the heaven where she was before. Rev. xii. So that none hath known the church all this time but he that hath been born of her in the wilderness; which was a place the world never dreamed of, but looked for her in the heaven and in the earth, which the devil had got possession of. And here they cry up the ordinances! the ordinances! duties! the church! the ministry! &c., (as the Jews did "the temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord!") not knowing in whose hands these were, and whom they worshipped hereby. Now consider this, O ye Christians! I speak what I assuredly know, that God could not be truly worshipped in any of these, while they were in the devil's hands; but the whorish spirit and her seed worship here: and the worship of the church and her seed was a wilderness worship, or a worship which she learned of God in the wilderness. Mark now, and consider my testimony, O ye Christians! I deny all the worship, all the ordinances, which were taught the Christians of old, now practised by the whorish spirit; for the devil had gained it and corrupted it; and having corrupted it, God could not be any more worshipped in it; but the antichristian spirit sat there, giving forth those things as his law. He sat in the temple of God, and there made use of the vessels and ordinances which he had carried captive into his Babylon; and I deny it to be possible to have any true use of these till the time of the recovery. And now the time of the recovery is come, and the restitution begun; people

know it not, but cry up the old heaven and the old earth, which Satan had corrupted, setting it up in opposition against the new, which God hath new formed, and is bringing forth in true beauty and glory.

Now in this war, though the devil, though the harlot and her seed got the woman's seed from her, and banished her seed as it were out of the earth, yet they were not able to touch the woman, nor to overcome the life of God in her seed, but only to kill their bodies; but the life was still conqueror over them, and not subjected to them. They could raise up churches, and ordinances, and ministers, and duties, and cause all that dwell on the earth to worship in some part or other of his Babylon; but they could never make the seed bow to any of their images; nor could they hurt the woman hereby who was in the wilderness, out of the reach of all these; and there she did eat the bread of life with tears, mourning over her desolate estate, and her loss of children. And here alone was the true bread of life, which was not to be known or tasted of in any of the ordinances of the apostasy. Ye will all one day acknowledge this to be a true testimony, held forth to you in true love: it were good for you that ye could see it now.

A brief account of what we are, and what our work is in the world.

We are a people whom God hath converted to himself; a people in whom God hath raised up the seed of his own life, and caused it to reign over the earthly part in ourselves; a people whom God hath divorced from the spirit of whoredom, and joined to his own Spirit. We, many of us, sought truly and only after God from our childhood; our consciences bear us witness in the sight of God; but the honesty of our hearts was still betrayed, and we led aside by the whorish spirit, and knew not how to turn to that of God in us, which inclined us towards God. By this means we came to great distress and misery beyond all men. Not but that all

men were in as great a want of God, his life, power, and presence, as we; but the sense thereof was not so quickened in others as in us. Now it pleased the Lord at length to pity us, and to inform our minds towards himself; to show us where life lay, and where death lay; and how to turn from the one and to the other, and he gave us his helping hand to turn us: and by being turned to him, we have tasted of the truth, of the true wisdom, of the true power, of the true life, of the true righteousness, of the true redemption; and by receiving of this from God, and tasting and handling of it, we come to know that that which the world hath set up in the stead of it, is not the thing itself. Now mark, we are not persons that have shot up out of the old root into another appearance, as one sect hath done out of another, till many are come up one after another, the ground still remaining the same out of which they all grew; but that ground hath been shaken and shaking, destroyed and destroying, removed and removing in us; and the old root of Jesse hath been made manifest in us, and we have been transplanted by the everlasting power of life, and a real change brought forth in us out of that spirit wherein the world lives and worships, into another Spirit, into which nothing which is of the world can enter. And here we have met with the call of God, the conversion to God, the regeneration in God, the justification, the sanctification, the wisdom, the redemption, the true life and power of God, which the world cannot so much as bear the name of. And what we are made of God in Christ, we know to be truth, and no lie; and when we testify of this to the world, in the measure of the life of God in us, we speak truth, and no lie; though the world, which knoweth not the truth, cannot hear our voice.

Now our work in the world is to hold forth the virtues of him that hath called us; to live like God; not to own any thing in the world which God doth not own; to forget our country, our kindred, our father's house, and to live like persons of another country, of another kindred, of another family; not to do any thing of ourselves, and which is pleas-

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may we make use of our own strength, bu
our weakness: nor may we go forth in that
or meekness, which is pleasing to the flesh
must be true to God, handling the sword sk
fully, judging and cutting down the tra
power and authority of God: and when the
the humble thing is reached and raised, th
the sweetness, the tenderness, the meeknes
to that. The Lord God is rough with the t
all along the scripture heweth and judgeth
come forth in the same Spirit, we shall fin
ings where we meet with the same thing: f
will never be tender there; nor can that w
him, lives in him, is led by him, be tender

the poor captived creature, that that might be cut down which keeps it in bonds and captivity. And though we seem enemies to all sorts of men for the Lord's sake; yet we are not enemies, nor could do the least hurt to them any way; but are true friends to their souls, and bodies also: and our only controversy is with that which captives and makes them miserable; for we fight not at all with flesh and blood, but with the principality and power which led from God, and rule in it against God, to the poor creature's ruin and destruction. Yea, if we had all the power of the earth in our hands, we could not set up our own way, (if, after the manner of men, I may so call it) or so much as disturb others in their way thereby; but should wait in patience till God gave us an entrance by his power.

Now let not men run on in heats against us; but let them seriously consider whether we be of God or no: and let them consider not with the reason and understanding which are alienated from God; but with the witness which lies hid in the heart. There is one great palpable argument that we are of God, which is this: all the world is against us; the worldly part everywhere fights with us; the worldly part, in every sort and sect of men, opposeth us; the rage of men everywhere riseth up against us: but those that are so hot against us, if at any time they become but meek and calm, patiently considering our cause, and consulting thereupon with the testimony that they find in their own hearts concerning us, they soon become pacified, and see that we are no man's enemies, against no righteous law, not against relations, not against governments, not against any thing in the world that is good; but only against that which is evil and corrupt. And of a truth, the corruption of things God hath shown unto us, and daily calls us forth after an immediate manner to witness against.

Therefore let men be sober, and take heed what they do, lest they be found fighters against God; for the reproaches, the scoffs, with other persecutions, which seem to be cast at us, light on him. It is not as we are men, but as we are obedient to him, as we stand witnesses for him, that we

not speak this for my own sake, to avoid
cross; for the reproach of Christ is our
greater treasure than is to be found in the
Yea, the presence of God, the sweet power
all our losses; so that we have no cause to
very sweet, pleasant, and profitable for us
ferers for God; but we know it will not
you to be found persecutors: and this is
love and good-will, by one who wishes no
all that evil that ye have exercised towa
precious people of God for these many yea
would open your eyes, that ye might se
opposed, and against whom ye have harder
ened yourselves, that ye might bow to him
from him, and not perish in your gainsayin

An addition concerning the doctrine of

Because the doctrine of justification is o
ment, and the enemy of mankind hath exc
ored to corrupt it, and in the apostasy hath g
and the darkness which springs up in the
exceeding thick at this day concerning this
in true love to souls, it is laid upon me to
scripture which chiefly speaks thereof, and

cerning it, which if well heeded, may dash men's present apprehensions about it, and bring them to wait for the opening of those scriptures to them, in another light than they have yet known.

1. He affirms that justification is not "by the deeds of the law." Rom. iii. 20. If a man could say with the young man, All these things have I done from my youth; or as Paul, that he was as touching the law blameless; yet could he not be justified thereby.

And the apostle gives a mighty reason; "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Now justification is not by the making of sin known, but by that which saves and delivers from it. The knowledge of sin may put a man upon seeking out for justification; but it cannot justify him, but rather condemn him; but that which delivers him from the sin, which the law makes known, that justifies him.

2. He affirms that "the righteousness of God" (which is the justification) "is manifested without the law." ver. 21. The law makes sin known, and shows the sinner the need of justification; but the justification itself is not thereby, but is manifested without it. The law commands the nature to act that pertains to similitudes, figures, types, and shadows, to the obedience of them; but the seed takes away the nature that pertains to similitudes and shadows and the works of the law. So to the obedience of those things the law commands, there is justification by the law in the obedience to the works it commands; but the justification, Christ, removes the nature that pertains to those things the law commands; so that justification, the law, ends in Christ.

3. That this righteousness or justification is "witnessed by the law and the prophets." ver. 21. The law, though it is not the justification, nor can the justification be by obedience to it, or by the deeds of it; yet it gives testimony to the justification: for the substance of what the law and all the prophets witness is, that nothing can justify but the righteousness of God.

4. That this righteousness or justification is "by the faith of Christ," ver. 22. by believing or entering into that

which justifies. As condemnation was by unbelief, by joining unto, and entering into, the spirit of enmity; so justification is by joining unto, and entering into, the Spirit of love, by true union with Christ in the Spirit; which union is by the faith which comes from Christ.

5. That this justification or righteousness is "upon all that believe." ver. 22. He that receiveth the faith, believeth; and he that believeth hath righteousness; and he that believeth not cannot have the righteousness; but the condemnation and wrath abide on him.

6. That this justification is "freely by the grace." ver. 24. There is no way to come to this righteousness but by the gift of grace; which gift is given freely. Therefore, if ever man will be justified, he must know the grace, and the gift which comes from the grace, and receive it; and receiving it, he cannot miss of justification; and not receiving it (but either being ignorant of it, or resisting of it), he cannot possibly be justified.

7. That this justification is by the "*redemption of Christ.*" ver. 24. Christ is the redeemer; the redemption (wherein is the justification) is in him, and there is no way of meeting with the justification or redemption, but by receiving of him in whom it is; and he who hath him, hath the justification, and is made partaker of the redemption; and he who hath not him, hath it not.

Mark then, the justification or redemption is not by believing of a thing done without man (though that also is to be believed), but by receiving him into the heart. For the virtue of all Christ did without, is within him: and I cannot be made partaker thereof by believing that he did such a thing without, or that he did it for me, but by receiving the virtue of it into me, and feeling the virtue of it in me. This is that which saves me, and makes that which was done without to be mine.

8. That Christ is the "propitiation," ver. 25. or that which pacifies and makes way for sinners to God; so that he that truly receiveth Christ hath the atonement; but he that hath not received him, only dreameth of peace with

God; but still remaineth in the enmity, and is liable to the wrath, having the bond of iniquity over him, and is in the night.

9. That this propitiation is by "faith in the blood." ver. 25. There is nothing pacifies God but the blood of his Son; and there is nothing feels the blood but the faith, and that which is in the faith. A man may read scriptures, and gather notions about justification, and think he believes aright, and shall be justified; but he never comes to feel the blood, nor the life which is in the blood, till he receive the faith, and then he knoweth the true propitiation and the true peace, which before he did but talk of.

10. That this faith is "the righteousness;" faith is the gift of God, and this gift justifies; this gift is the justification; this is that which God "imputeth for righteousness." chap. iv. ver. 3, 5. The faith is in the blood, and the blood in the Son; and in the true receiving of the Son, both the faith and the blood are known and felt. These are true words, though hard to the fleshly ear. Do not stumble in the wisdom, but calmly wait for the revelation of the spirit, and then thou wilt say, the price of this knowledge is not to be valued; and if once thou come to taste truth here, all thy knowledge in the letter will be but dross with thee. "Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling." Oh, do not rest in an outward way of believing, an outward thing; but seek out the way of coming to the blood of sprinkling.

11. That the justification is of the "ungodly." ver. 5. He whom God maketh righteous, was ungodly before he made him righteous. There was nothing but unrighteousness could be imputed to him in transgression, before he gave him his Son, and made him righteous in his Son; for nothing is righteous with God but Christ, and man only as he is taken into his righteousness; which is done not by a believing from the bare letter, but by a receiving of faith in the life.

12. That the justification of the ungodly is by believing in him that justifieth. ver. 5. The gift of faith goes forth from him, and is received into the heart. Now both by the

gift itself, and by the exercise of it, is the justification; by receiving of the gift is the person justified; by the exercise of the gift are all his actions justified. Christ being let into the heart, justifies the heart into which he is received; and Christ being in the heart, justifies every motion and action that comes from his life; and any other motion or action is not justified; for it is out of that which is justified, and is in and from that which is condemned.

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." ver. 3. God promised him a seed; he believed God. God bid him sacrifice this type; he believed. This was it which was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now if he had not believed; if he had not received the gift, or not exercised the gift, could he have been righteous? So that Abraham was not justified by any work he did, or could do; but by receiving and exercising the faith in the seed: by going out of his country, kindred, and father's house, not of himself, but by faith, and by living to God, and obeying his voice in that land to which he was led; not in his own will or power, but in the faith. And by hearing the call of God, and receiving the faith, and living out of self, out of a man's own understanding, will, and power, in the faith, and living power, and wisdom of God, is the justification now: and they that do thus are children of Abraham, born of the free woman; when as they who take up practices from the letter, without being ingrafted into the life, are but children of the bond-woman; but such children of Abraham as the Jews were (if so much); and cannot inherit that promise which belongs to the spiritual seed, while they live in that state.

13. That where the faith which is imputed unto righteousness is found, there "sin is not imputed, but covered;" which is a blessed state. ver. 6, 7, 8. Sin cuts off from God, who is life and blessedness. Sin lays open to the wrath of the Creator which is too great for the creature to bear. Wo and misery will be his portion to whom God imputes sin; but happy is he who has his sin covered! This is a happy condition; life and immortality will soon be opened to him.

Now this blessedness cometh not by the works of the law, for they cannot remove the sin; but by the righteousness of faith, which is able to cover the sin even from the pure eye of God. O Christians, Christians! do not imagine yourselves covered from sin; but know it, feel it; never rest till ye are so made partakers of the true righteousness, that, by its virtue in you, ye may be past all doubt that it is it. Believing from the letter without you that ye are justified, may easily deceive you; but if once you come truly to feel in yourselves the thing which justifies, and so find the power and life of it in you, above the power of all that which condemns, casting out the condemned thing, and the condemner, with all his works, out of your hearts; this cannot deceive. The virtue of life was lost in the apostasy; and that which was living did not so much enjoy life as mourn after it; and the power and safety of life did then appear most in mourning; but now the apostasy draws towards an end, and the virtue begins to shoot up again; and he that will be a Christian now, must be so, not by retaining his old notions, but by feeling this new virtue, and by growing up in this new-sprung life and power of the Lord, whose appearance is new to us, who have not been acquainted with it, but have been brought up in the darkness of the apostasy, and lived in the waters where the great leviathan ruled, and who was able to make war with him there? But he that seeketh, is joined with, and keepeth to, that power which drieth up the waters, and putteth an hook into the nostrils of the leviathan; shall find the world, with the whole course of it, ending in himself, and the beginning and growth of an endless life; and in whom that life lives, they shall live also; but where death keeps the power of life down, such shall not live, or know the blessing, but abide under the curse of misery and death, and under the powers of darkness. Therefore look about you, and make a wise choice; for his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether the prince of darkness, in his invented forms of godliness, or the prince of light, in the living power; and your reward shall be according to your choice and work,

either death in the death, if ye choose and join to that; or life in the life, if ye join to that. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.

THE

SCATTERED SHEEP

SOUGHT AFTER.

FIRST,

In a LAMENTATION over the GENERAL LOSS of the powerful PRESENCE of GOD in his People since the Days of the APOSTLES; with a particular Bewailing of the Withering and Death of those precious Buddings-forth of Life, which appeared in many at the Beginning of the late Troubles in these Nations; with the proper WAY of RECOVERY for such.

SECONDLY,

In some PROPOSITIONS concerning the ONLY WAY OF SALVATION; where is an ANSWER given to that great OBJECTION, that the Light which convinceth of Sin, is the Light of a natural Conscience; and a brief Account rendered of the Ground of Men's understanding Scriptures.

THIRDLY,

In exposing to view the FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE of the GOSPEL, upon which the REDEEMED SPIRIT is built.

FOURTHLY,

And in some QUESTIONS and ANSWERS (by way of CATECHISM, for the sake of the Simple-hearted) directing to that Principle, and fixing in it.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON, THE YOUNGER.

When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died. And now they sin more and more, &c., therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, as the early dew, &c. Hos. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

Yea, his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up. Ver. 15.

We have all been as sheep going astray; but blessed be the everlasting arm which hath gathered any of us to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

Oh come to the fold; O scattered sheep, come to the fold. Wander no longer from mountain to hill; but remember your resting-place, the old resting-place of Israel, even the mountain of the Lord's house, where Israel may lie down and feed in peace, and no ravenous beast can disturb.

O house of Jacob, let whoredom, wine, and new wine no longer steal away your hearts; but come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

PREFACE.

"My people have committed two great evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." This was ever and anon the complaint of the Lord concerning Israel, from the beginning to the end. The Lord did delight to beget, nourish, and bring up that people for himself; but they were almost continually revolting from him, and rebelling against him. He did mighty things for them; but they still forgot him. He redeemed them by his outstretched arm; he fed them, he defended them; but they knew him not, Isaiah i. 3. but decked themselves with the ornaments which they had from him, and then lift up the heel against him. Ezek. xvi. 7. and Deut. xxxii. 15. In plain terms, they got what knowledge they could from him into their own vessels, and then they would set up for themselves, live of themselves, without fresh bubblings-up of life from the spring, from whence their knowledge came. The priests said not, Where is the Lord? but could handle the law, and teach the knowledge of it without him; and the prophets could prophesy by another spirit. Jer. ii. 8. And thus the Lord God of life lived not in them; but they lived upon such things as once came from the life; but, being separated from the spring, were dead, and nourished but the dead part in them, the estranged from God. And thus, though their professions were great, and they multiplied prayers, sacrifices, and fasts, and drew nigh to God with their lips, yet their hearts were far from him. They had forsaken the fountain; they drank not of the waters of the spring, of the rock that followed them; but they drank of the waters of their own cisterns. They set up that knowledge of the law for their light which they had hewed out with the tools of their own understanding, without the spirit

that wrote it. This was Israel's error of old: they drank very zealously of the waters of the law; but they drank it not from the spring, but out of the cisterns which themselves had hewed.

And as it was thus with Israel of old, so hath it been with Israel since. The Christian Israel hath been always backsliding, always forgetting the Lord! still getting what they could from him to live of themselves, but refusing to live on him: getting what knowledge they could from the scriptures without him; getting what they could from their exercises and experiences; but neglecting the spring of their life. And so this Israel also dies; this Israel likewise withers, and becomes a scorn to the heathen. For though they speak great words of their God; yet they themselves are but as the heathen; uncircumcised like them; unacquainted with the virtue and power of life like them; always striving against sin in that which cannot conquer; and so they also are slaves under their lusts and corruptions, like the heathen, and know not the truth, which makes free indeed.

Exceeding great hath been the apostasy of this age! mighty was the appearance of God inwardly in his people's spirits! mighty was the appearance of God outwardly in the nation! many ways and great hopes there were of a thorough reformation. But how suddenly was the pure spirit of the Lord forgotten, and departed from, and his work overturned both within and without; inwardly in his people's spirits, and outwardly in the nation, whose revolting was but a type of the inward! and how hath the spirit of the Lord mourned after his people, often reproving them for their backslidings! but they have been (as Israel of old) like the deaf adder, justifying themselves, and complaining against the witnesses of God (as Israel did against his prophets) who from the Lord testify against them. And it cannot be otherwise; for the dead waters in Israel's hewn cisterns will never agree with the waters of the living fountain, but will withstand their testimony.

How shall the charmer charm wisely enough to make apostate Israel hearken to his voice! I have not backslidden,

saith one in one form; I have not backslidden, saith another in another form: I have not backslidden, saith one in one notion; I am not backslidden, saith another in another notion: I am believing, hoping, and waiting in what the Lord hath already revealed, and following on to know him. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my word; but still hast been justifying thyself as if thou hadst obeyed. And yet your backslidings are written upon your foreheads, as with the point of a diamond. For who among you retains his freshness? An evident demonstration that ye are departed from the spring, and hold your knowledge, experiences, and hopes in the dead part; and your choicest prop of comfort is the remembrance of what ye once had. Ah poor, barren, dead souls, is this your best support! return, return; enter into the house of mourning, and let the living lay it to heart.

THE SCATTERED SHEEP SOUGHT AFTER.

A LAMENTATION; WITH A CALL TO MOURNING AND LAMENTATION, &c.

O ISRAEL, the royal seed, the plant of renown, the living offspring of eternity! O daughter of Sion, who didst once shine with the beauty and glory of life, what is become of thee! How art thou held captive, and chained up in Babylon! How dost thou lie sullied among the pots! How are the wings of thy dove clipped! How art thou covered and polluted with the filth of the whole earth!

Oh take up a lamentation, weep, O Israel! mourn, O daughter of Jerusalem! bewail thy widowhood, thy desolation, thy loss of husband, thy sad captivity, thy banishment

out of thine own land, and thy thraldom in the land of thine enemy!

What is become of thy God, the mighty God of Jacob, whose out-stretched arm hath been able to save and redeem his seed out of bondage? What enemy hath been able to stand before him? What wild boar out of the wood, or wild beast out of the forest, was able to break into his vineyard, while he kept the fence? Where is that arm that smote Rahab, and slew the dragon? Where is that hook that he was wont to put into the nostrils of the leviathan? Pharaoh is alive, the wise Egyptians have power, Egypt holds the seed in bondage; Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre, are all able to smite Israel, and to stop up the well-springs of life. Awake, O arm of the Lord! and awaken Israel, that thou again mayest become his saviour in the sight of all the nations; and let all the house of Israel, being awakened, mourn in the spirit of the Lord after the Lord.

What is become of thy Messiah, the Lord's anointed, the captain of the Lord's host, the angel of the covenant of life; who was wont to go in and out before thee in fighting the Lord's battles; who was thy prince and saviour in the land of peace and rest; who walked in the midst of the candlesticks; who was thy king, thy shepherd, thy temple wherein thou worshippedst, and the eternal light of thy life in the land of the living?

What is become of that holy spirit which quickened thee to God, and which lived in thee being quickened; which kept thee alive in him that liveth, and made thee taste of the sweetness of life continually? Where is the anointing which suppled thee all over with the oil of gladness and salvation? Where is the comforter that refreshed thy spirit continually, and led thee into all truth, teaching thee all the things of God according to thy measure of growth in the life? Where is the spirit of thy father, which spirited thee with thy father's nature, which begat and brought forth the life, power, glory, majesty, eternity of thy father in thee? What is become of Sion, the holy mount, whereon thou wast built?

Sion, the fortress of holiness, where is it? What is become of Jerusalem, the holy city, thy mother, whereof thou wast born? What is become of that covenant of life, in whose womb thou wast begotten and brought forth, and by whose milk and breath thou wast afterwards nourished and brought up.

Where are all the fruits of the holy land; the pleasant grapes, the sweet figs, the precious olives that yielded wine and oil to make the heart glad, and to refresh the countenance of the Lord of life? Where is the joy in the Lord, the obedience to the Lord, the praying, the praising, the living, the walking in his spirit, the entering into and bringing forth fruit in his pure understanding, and in his holy and unspotted will, and moving in the purified heart?

Alas, alas! Babylon has prevailed; her king hath reigned; Sion hath been held in bonds; and that which hath sprung up under her name, hath been the filthy offspring of Babylon, the seed of the mother of harlots; and these have brought forth sour fruit, loathsome fruit, finely painted to the view of that eye which cannot search into it, but loathsome in its nature. This has been the state of the apostasy since the days of the apostles, wherein that which hath not been of God hath reigned, and that which hath been of God hath suffered, and been reproached as if it had not been of God, and hath panted and mourned after the springing up of the spring of its life, and its gathering into it.

The deep sense of this hath afflicted my soul from my tender years; the eternal witness awakening in me, and the eternal light manifesting the darkness all along unto me; though I knew not that it was the light, but went about to measure its appearances in me by words which itself had formerly spoken to others, and so set up my own understanding and comprehension as the measure, although I did not then perceive or think that I did so. Thus continually, through ignorance, I slew the life, and sold myself for a thing of nothing, even for such an appearance of life as my understanding part could judge most agreeable to scriptures. This the Lord blew upon, though its comeliness was unut-

terable (the life still feeding my spirit underneath, from whence sprang an inward beauty and freshness). Then such a day, or rather night, of darkness and distress overtook me, as would make the hardest heart melt to hear the relation of; yet the Lord was in that darkness, and he preserved me, and was forming of me to himself; and the taste I had then of him was far beyond whatever I had known in the purest strain of my religion formerly. And the Lord powerfully shut up my understanding, and preserved my life from the betrayer; but yet that was not perfectly destroyed in me upon which the tempter might work: and the Lord suffered him to lay a snare, and my feet were entangled unawares, insomuch as the simplicity was betrayed, and the fleshly part grew wise, by those exercises wherewith the Lord had tried me. This poisoned me; this hurt me; this struck at the root of my life, and death insensibly grew upon me. The devil, the envious seedsman, cozened me with the image of that, which before I had had in the truth, opening my understanding part (by the subtlety of temptation and deceit) which the Lord had been destroying; and letting that in, which the Lord had shut out: and then the Lord took away and shut up from that part, that which before he had opened to the seed, whereby the way of life became stopped, and the way of death opened in a mystery. And then I could talk of universal love, of spiritual liberty, &c., and wait for the glorious appearance of life, having lost that which formerly gave me the sense of its nature; yea, at length I could seek to the creatures for what they could yield, and strive to rub out the time of my misery without the immediate presence of the life of the Creator. And as for this despicable people, whom I now own in the Lord, I could measure them, I could fathom them, I could own their standing; and yet see their shortness; and could, with satisfaction to my spirit, write death upon them, as the end of that dispensation of life into which I saw them enter, and in part entered. Here was my standing when the Lord drew his sword upon me, and smote me in the very inmost of my soul; by which stroke (lying still a while

under it) my eyes came to be opened; and then I saw the blindness of that eye which was able to see so far, and the narrowness of that heart and spirit which was so large and vast in comprehending: and my soul bowed down to the Lord to slay this, to starve this, to make a fool of this; yea, my desire was, to present sense, as great after the death of this, as after the enjoyment of life in the Lord.

And now this hath opened a fresh spring of sorrow in me, a mourning over the just One, which hath been slain by me. Oh how cruelly, how often have I murdered that which came to give me life! How often have I sought to have my own understanding, my own comprehension, my own will and affections in religion, live, and the righteous, pure, immortal principle die! though I did not then call it my own, as other men do not now; but took it to be of God, and to be the thing that was to live. For I also was deceived, and thought the bastard (which was a false conception) was to inherit; not knowing him to be the bastard, but taking him for the right heir. And my soul is exceedingly enlarged in me towards those who at this day lie under the power of the same deceit; who have slain the Lord of life as well as I, and in whom the contrary nature lives under a covering; who cannot possibly see that this, which now lives in them, is not the heir, until the same eye be opened in them.

The life that was stirring at the beginning of the trouble of these nations was very precious. It did unite to God; it did unite to one another; it kindled an universal sense of the captivity, of the bondage, of the great oppression of Israel, and a joint cry went up to God for deliverance. And God heard the cry, and arose to deliver, and did begin to break the yoke, both outwardly in the nation, and inwardly in people's spirits.

But the tempter did also set himself on work again to entangle Israel. For this end he brings forth likenesses of that which Israel desired, and was seeking after. He brings forth several forms of worship, to allure some with; several sorts of notions, to allure others with; several fresh appear-

ances of life, of love, of liberty, to tempt the people of God aside from following that spirit which rose up to deliver. Thus comes he forth and prevails; he divides in Jacob, and scatters in Israel; drawing one part to this form; another part toward that form; one to this notion, and another to that notion; one to this inward image, another to that spiritual idol; and all from the life, all from the power, all from the Saviour, all from the deliverer, and so the work stops. It stops in the nation, and it stops in people's spirits; and men generally wheel about and enter again, and apply themselves to make images like the images they had destroyed: and so the captivity returns; Israel is turned back into his bonds, and the spirit which oppressed him before, crusheth him again, and rules over him. And so great hath the breach been upon Israel, that the spirit of the world is become hardened, and thinks there is an end of this work of God; and now they may venture again to settle both church and state upon the old principles of that wisdom which the Lord was shaking.

And now where is the people whom the Lord was redeeming? Where is the praying people, the panting people, the mourning people, the people that could have travelled from sea to sea to have had the will of God revealed? Are they not run into the earth? Is not the spirit of the earth come over them? Are they not dividing the spoils? The inward Jew, the renewed nature is sunk, lost, made a prey of; the Gentile, the heathenish spirit hath risen up, and seated itself in a form of worship, or in some high notions of knowledge, on which that spirit, which knows not the tree of life, loves to feed. Some are stark dead, no sense at all in them, but life quite swallowed up of death: others perhaps are still pressing towards the kingdom; but in the wrong nature, in that which shall never obtain: and they may there meet with some enjoyments; but not enjoyments from or of the true thing, but the likeness which the enemy hath painted to deceive them with. And they may also wait and hope that the kingdom will come, and yet be out of that which knows its coming, and can alone prepare the heart for its

appearance. Yea, some are got so high, that they are even in the throne. They have the love, the life, the liberty, the joy, the peace of the kingdom, as they imagine. They can reign as kings without us, without that nature and principle wherein our life lies. But these mighty ones, these princes, the Lord will pull from their seat, and raise up the humble, the meek, the low in heart, the beggar from the dunghill, and give to him the throne of his glory.

Now this my life in love saith to you all, as the proper and only way of your recovery and redemption, Come to that which can judge you. "Sion is to be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness." If Sion be redeemed, if the seed be again raised, that spirit which hath got up above it, and keepeth it down, must be judged, and brought under by judgment. How was Israel of old to be recovered from her idolatries and whoredoms, but by owning and coming to that light in the prophets which manifested and judged them? Ye also have worshipped idols; ye also have run a whoring from the Lord, and have been inflamed with idols under every green tree. Every new idol, every fresh appearance, every lively likeness, hath tempted you aside from the living God. When one way of worship hath been dry and barren, ye have left that: when some notions of things have appeared empty and shallow, ye have been weary of them; but the next new idol, under the next green tree, hath drawn you aside into the bed of whoredom, where ye have lost true fellowship with the true God of life, and have been betrayed of the seed of life, which he began to quicken and raise from the dead. Now come to that which judgeth the idol, the idol-maker, the whorish spirit, which tempteth aside from the true husband, and that spirit which is liable to be tempted; and let these be cut down by the judgment, and then the true seed of life will spring and flourish again. There is no other way; be not deceived: that must be awakened in you which can judge you, and must bring forth its judgment in you unto victory, if life in you ever rise and get the dominion over death. And that spirit which now rules in you, and keeps

the life down, knows this very well, and therefore endeavors all it can to keep you from owning judgment. He would fain keep the light in others from judging you. "Do not judge," saith he; "all judgment is committed to the Son." True; but shall not the light of the Son judge? Shall not the light of that candle, which the Lord hath lighted in one heart, discover and judge the darkness in another heart? Light doth make manifest, and its manifestation is its judgment. The uttering of the words is but the declaration of what the light in the heart hath done before, and cannot but do: for as long as it is light, wherever it comes, it will and cannot but discover and judge the darkness it meets with; though the darkness cannot own either its discovery or its judgment, but must needs except against it. Now if he cannot do this (which is utterly impossible for the dark spirit to do) then, in the next place, he fortifies and hardens the heart as much as he can from receiving the judgment, by persuading him to look upon it as the judgment of another spirit like his own, and not as the judgment of the light. And so what Paul said concerning man's judgment (that it was a small matter to him to be judged by man's judgment), the same will he say concerning this judgment. And yet, as the greatest judgment of man, in the highest strain of the comprehending part, shall fall; so the lowest judgment of the light, in the weakest child, shall stand: and all the exalted ones of the earth shall in due time fall before it; though now, in the present elevation of their minds, they may rise above it, and trample it down. Therefore be not afraid to judge deceit, O ye weak ones! but be sure that the light alone in you judge; and lie very low in the light, that that part which the light in you judgeth in others get not up in you, while the light is making use of you to judge it in others.

And now, ye poor lost souls, who find the need of judgment, and any willingness within you to embrace it, wait first for the rising of the Judge of Israel in your hearts, and in the next place wait for the joining of your hearts to him; both which are to be done by his eternal light, which mani-

fests and gives his life. In the lowest shining of this light there is the judgment, and there is the king himself, who is not severed from the least degree or measure of his own light. Bow down to him, kiss his feet, know the nature of the thing, and be subject to it: worship him here in his humiliation, receive him in his strokes, in his smitings, and observe and turn from that in yourselves which smites him, and ye shall one day see him in his majesty, in the power of his love, in his everlasting healings and embraces. And know assuredly, that that which will not worship him here, will not be fit to worship him there, nor shall not; but shall only tremble at the dread of his majesty, and be confounded at the sweetness of his love, but not be able to bow down to it in the true life. For that spirit, which is out of the life, is shut out in its highest desires, hopes, attainments, enjoyments, seemingly spiritual rest, universal love, liberty, and peace, as well as in its darkest and grossest paths of pollution. Therefore wait to know the nature of things, that ye may not be deceived with the highest, choicest, and most powerful appearances of death in the exactest image of life, nor stumble at the true life in its lowest and weakest appearance. And this ye can only attain to by a birth of, and growth up in, the true wisdom, which slays that spirit which lives on the same things in the comprehension, and gathers a stock of knowledge and experiences in its own understanding part. These are words of tender love, and they will also be words of true life, where the Father's earth opens to drink them in; to whose good pleasure and blessing my soul commends them.

Some Propositions concerning the only Way of Salvation.

1. *That there is no way of being saved from sin, and wrath eternal, but by that Christ alone which died at Jerusalem.* There is no name, virtue, life, or power under heaven given, by which lost man may be saved, but his alone.

2. *That there is no way of being saved by him, but through receiving him into the heart by a living faith, and having him formed in the heart.* Christ saves not as he stands without at the door knocking, but as he is let in; and being let in, he brings in with him that life, power, and mercy, which break down the wall of partition, unite to God, and save. The Jews could not be saved formerly by the belief of a Messiah to come, with the observation of all the laws and ordinances of Moses; nor can any now be saved by the belief of a Christ already come, with observation of all that the apostles commanded or practised; but alone by the receiving of him into the heart, who there works out the salvation.

3. *That there is no way of receiving Christ into the heart, and of having him formed there, but by receiving the light of his spirit, in which light he is and dwells.* Keep out the light of his spirit, keep out Christ: let in the light of his spirit, let in Christ: for the Father and the Son are light, and are alone known and received in the light; but never out of it.

4. *That the way of receiving the light of the Spirit into the heart* (and thereby uniting with the Father, and the Son) *is by hearkening to, and receiving its convictions of sin there.* The first operation of the Spirit towards man lying in the sin, is to convince him of the sin; and he that receives not the convincing light of the Spirit, the work is stopped in him at the very first; and Christ can never come to be formed in him, because that light whereby he should be formed is kept out. And then he may talk of Christ, and practise duties (pray, read, and meditate much), and gather comforts from promises, and run into ordinances, and be exceeding zealous and affectionate in all these, and yet perish in the end. Yea, the devil will let him alone (if not help him) in all this, knowing that he hath him the surer thereby, he being (by the strict observation of these) kept out of the fear of the danger of his condition, which otherwise perhaps he might be made sensible of.

Object. *But I may be deceived in hearkening to a light within; for while I think that I therein hearken to the light of the Spirit, it may prove but the light of a natural conscience.*

Ans. 1. If it should be but the light of a natural conscience, and it draw thee from sin, which separates from God, and so prepare thee for the understanding, believing, and receiving what the scripture saith of Christ; this is no very bad deceit: but if, in the result, it should prove to have been the light of the spirit, and, thou all thy life-time, hast taken it for the light of a natural conscience (and so hast despised, or at least neglected, if not reproached it), thou wilt then find that this was a very bad deceit.

2. I can show thee by express scripture, that it is the work of the spirit to convince of sin. John xvi. 8. And again, that the law, which is spiritual, manifesteth that which is corrupt and carnal. Rom. vii. 14. But where canst thou show me from scripture, that a natural conscience can convince of sin?

3. Let any man give heed to the light in his heart, he shall find it to discover his most inward, his most secret, his most spiritual evils; which a natural light cannot do: for that which is natural cannot discover that which is spiritual.

4. The apostle saith, that it is the grace which hath appeared to all men, which teacheth not only godliness, but also sobriety and righteousness. Tit. ii. 11, 12. The light of the fallen nature is darkness, can teach nothing of God. What any man learns now of the true knowledge of God, he learns by grace, which shines in the darkness of man's nature, to leaven it with the true knowledge; though man, being darkness, can by no means comprehend it, and so cannot give it its true name.

Therefore take heed, lest (through ignorance) ye blaspheme the holy light of the pure spirit; calling that natural (looking on it with the carnal eye) which, with the spiritual eye, is seen to be spiritual. For thou that dost this wilt be also erring on the other hand, calling thy carnal meanings and conceivings, about the mind of the spirit of God in scripture, spiritual. And he that thus puts darkness for light, must needs put light for darkness; and then call evil good, and good evil: and so err from the spirit of God in

the whole course of his religion, even in the most inward exercises of it.

Man, by nature, is dead in trespasses and sins; quite dead, and his conscience wholly dark. That which giveth him the sense of his death, and of his darkness, must be another thing than his nature, even the light of the spirit of Christ, shining in his dark heart and conscience. It is the seed of the woman which not only destroys, but also discovers, all the deeds of the serpent. Now this seed, this light is one in all, though there have been several dispensations of it. One to the heathen; in whom it springs up after an hidden manner, even as it were naturally; from whence it had the name of *the light of nature* (though it be the mystery of life and salvation hid in them, Col. i. 27. *this mystery* IN *the Gentiles;* it is ill translated, *among*). Another to the Jews, in whom it was more rigorously stirred by a law given; who by types and shadows, and righteous exercises according to the law, were to be awakened to the living principle. Micah vi. 8. Another to the Christians, in whom it was livelily brought forth to light and life, by an especial dispensation of grace; insomuch as that which was the *mystery in the Gentiles*, and veiled from the Jews, being opened in them, was found to be *Christ the hope*. Col. i. 27. But under all these dispensations, the generality of men have fallen short of the glory of God, and missed of the substance. Therefore the Lord God is now bringing forth the substance itself, but under such a veil as hides it from the eye of man's wisdom, under what dispensation soever he be, and how high soever in that dispensation. To some it seems natural; to others legal; to some it seems from the power of Satan (or at least they pretend so); to others it seems the ministry of John Baptist. Thus men guess at it in the wisdom of their comprehensions, wanting the true line and plummet to measure it by.

Now to you who have not waited to learn in the wisdom of God the names of things (which there are given according to their nature); but, in the forwardness of your spirits, from your gathered knowledge, without the living power,

have ventured to call that natural, which in the eternal wisdom is seen to be spiritual, and which hath been able to effect that, which all that knowledge which ye call spiritual could never do, let me propose the consideration of one scripture to your consciences, in the sight of God.

The scripture is that in Job xxviii. 12. to the end. "Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof, &c. Whence then cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of heaven. Destruction and death say, We have heard of the fame thereof with our ears: God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof, &c. And he said unto man, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding." Now consider well:

First, Is this natural wisdom, or spiritual wisdom, that is thus precious? What is this, that destruction and death have heard the fame of? Is it the wisdom of nature? Or is it Christ, the wisdom of God?

Secondly, Where is the place of this? Where doth God point man to find this wisdom? He points him to the fear. *Unto man he said*, "(he hath showed thee, O man! what is good) Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding." Go to the fear; there it is taught; that is the wisdom: learn by the fear to depart from evil; that is understanding. This is it which is so precious, which nothing can equalize or value; here is the place of it, thus it is to be learned: sin overspreads all the land of darkness; there is no fear of God before men's eyes there; there is no learning of the fear there; all the wisdom that man can come by, cannot teach it: he that learneth to fear God, to depart from evil, must learn of Christ, the wisdom of God, and must deny all the varieties of the wisdom of man; which undertakes to reach it but cannot.

Thirdly, What is that in man, which teacheth the fear? which teacheth to depart from evil? Every man hath in him an eye that sees the evil; what is that eye, which the god of this world doth so strive to blind, and doth generally blind? Every man hath in him an enemy to evil; one that never consented to it, but still reproves it, and fights against it, even in secret. What is this? This is no less than a ray from Christ, the wisdom of God, out of the seat of the fear in every heart, to lead into the fear, where the law of departing from iniquity is learned: and so this ray, being hearkened unto, and followed in the fear, brings up into the love, into the life, into the light, into the wisdom, into the power. Do not shut your eyes now, O ye wise ones! but open your hearts, and let in that which knocks there, which can and will save you, being let in, and which alone can save you. For it is not a notion of Christ without (with multitudes of practices of self-denial and mortification thereupon) which can save; but Christ heard knocking, and let into the heart. This will open the scriptures aright; yea, this is the true key, which will truly open words, things, and spirits: but he that opens without this key, is a thief and a robber, and shall restore, in the day of God's judgment, all that he had stolen: and woe to him, who, when he was stripped of what he hath stolen, is found naked.

The scriptures were generally given forth to the people of God; part to the Jews, part to the Christians. He that is born of the life, hath a right unto them, and can read and understand them in the spirit which dwells in the life. But he that is not born of the spirit is but an intruder, and doth but steal other men's light, and other men's conditions and experiences into his carnal understanding; for which they were never intended, but only to be read and seen in that light which wrote them. And all these carnal apprehensions of his (with all the faith, hope, love, knowledge, exercises, &c., which he hath gained into his spirit hereby; with all his prayers, tears, and fasts, and other imitations), will become loss to him (for he must be stripped of them all, and become so much the more naked), when God recovers his

scriptures from man's dark spirit (which hath torn them, and exceedingly profaned them with his conceivings, guessings, and imaginings), and restores them again to his people. The prophets and apostles, who wrote the scriptures, first had the life in them: and he who understands their words, must first have the life in him. He that understands the words of life, must first have life in himself. And the life, from which the words came, is the measurer of the words, and not the words of the life. And when the scripture is interpreted by the life and spirit which penned it, there is then no more jangling and contending about it: for all this is out of the life; from and in that spirit, nature, and mind, where the lust, the enmity, the contention are; and not the unity, the love, the peace. But this is it which undoeth all; the dead spirit of man reads scripture, and from that wisdom, which is in the death (not knowing the mind of the spirit), gives meanings: and from believing and practising the things there spoken of (which death may do, as well as speak of the same), gathers a hope that all shall be well at last for Christ's sake; though it feel not the purification, the cleansing, the circumcision, which cuts off the body of sin and death here (for it is not to be cut off hereafter), and so gives an entrance into the everlasting kingdom, where the King of Righteousness is seen, known, and worshipped in spirit.

The fundamental Principle of the Gospel.

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." 1 John, i. 5.

This was the message which Christ gave his apostles, to make way into men's hearts by: this is the first thing that is proper for the mind to receive, which lies in the darkness; namely, that there is no darkness in God, nothing but light. Darkness is excluded from him, and the mind that lies in

darkness cannot have union or fellowship with him. Therefore he that will be one with God, and partake of his life, must come out of the darkness, which hath no place with God, into the light where God is, and in which he dwells.

The work of the Son is to reveal the Father, and to draw to the Father. He reveals him as light, as the spring of light, as the fountain of light, and he draws to him as light. When he gave to his apostles the standing message, whereby they were to make him known to the world, and whereby men were to come into fellowship and acquaintance with him; this is it, "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

Christ Jesus, the Son of God, he is the image of his substance, the exact image of this light, the light of the world, who is to light the world into this substance. So that as God the Father is to be known as light, so Christ the Son also is to be known as light. He is the only begotten of the Father of lights, the only image wherein the eternal substance is revealed and made known. And he that receives this image, receives the substance; and he that receives not this image, receives not the substance.

Now there is a breath or spirit from this substance, in this image, which draws to the image; thus the Father draws to the Son; and the image again draws to the substance; thus the Son draws to the Father. And so hearkening to this breath, the mind and soul is led out of the darkness, into the image of light (which is the Son), and by the image into the substance: and here is the fellowship which the gospel invites to. Joining to this breath, being transformed by this breath, living in this breath, walking in this holy inspiration, there is a unity with the Father and the Son, who themselves dwell in this breath, from whom this breath comes, in whom this breath is, and in whom all are, who are one with this breath.

This breath purgeth out the dark breath, the dark air, the dark power, the mystery of death and darkness; and fills with the breath of light, with the breath of life, with the living power, with the holy, pure mystery.

Now, as the Father is light, and the Son light; so this breath, this spirit which proceeds from them both, is light also. And as the Father, who is light, can alone be revealed by the Son, who is light; so the Son, who is light, can alone be revealed by the spirit, who is light.

He then who hears this message, that God is light; and feeleth himself darkness, and in darkness, and is willing to be drawn out of the darkness into fellowship with God, who is light; this is requisite for him to know; namely, how he may be drawn out, who is it that draws, and which are the drawings; that he may not resist or neglect them (waiting for another thing) and so miss of the true and only passage unto life. Wherefore, observe this heedfully.

None can draw to the Father, but the Son; none can draw to the Son, but the Father: and both these alone draw by the spirit. The Father, by his spirit, draws to the Son; the Son, by the same spirit, draws to the Father: and they both draw by the spirit as he is light, as he is their light lighted to that end. For as the Father is light, and the Son is light; so that spirit which draws them must be light also. He is, indeed, the breath of light, eternally lighted, to draw to the eternal image of light, and then to the eternal substance, which eternally dwells in that eternal image.

Quest. *But how may I know the spirit, and its operations; that I may follow him, and be led by them, both to the Son and to the Father; and so come into the everlasting fellowship?*

Ans. The spirit is to be known by those motions and operations which are proper to him; which flow alone from him, and from nothing else.

Quest. *What are they?*

Ans. Convincing of sin, and reproving for sin; which nothing can truly discover and reprove, but the light of the spirit. Darkness cannot make manifest darkness, but whatsoever maketh manifest is light. All the discoveries of darkness, in the hidden world of the heart, are from Christ the sun of righteousness, by his spirit, what name soever men may give it; who know not this sun, nor its light, nor the true names of things in the light; but have named even

the things of God in the dark, and according to the dark apprehensions and conceptions of their own imaginary mind. But this I say to such, who are so ready to beat their brains and dispute, leave contending about names; come to the thing, come to that which reproves thee in secret, follow the light that thus checks and draws; be diligent, be faithful, be obedient; thou shalt find this lead thee to that, which all thy knowledge out of this (even all that which thou callest spiritual light) will never be able to lead thee to.

And when thou art joined to this light, it will show thee him whom thou hast pierced (even so as never yet thou sawest him), and open a fresh vein of blood and grief in thee, to bleed and mourn over him; and work that repentance in thee, which thou never wast acquainted with before; and teach thee that faith to which yet thou art a stranger; and teach thee that self-denial, which will reach to the very root of that nature which yet lives; even under that, and by means of that, which thou callest spiritual light; and will lay such a yoke on thy neck, as the unrighteous one is not able to bear: yea, such an one as the hypocrite (which is able to hide it under confessions of sin, and forms of zeal, knowledge, devotion, and worship) shall be daily tormented and wasted with. And then thou shalt know what it is to wait upon God in the way of his judgments, and find the powers of life and death striving for thy soul, and daily floods and storms encompassing and attending thee, under which thou wilt assuredly fall and perish, unless the everlasting arm of God's power be stretched out for thee, and be continually redeeming thee. And then thou wilt feel and see how sin is pardoned, and how it is bound; how death broke in upon Adam, and how it daily breaks in upon mankind; and what that standard is, which the Spirit of the Lord lifteth up against the powers of darkness. And then thou wilt come clearly to perceive, how that which thou hast called religion formerly (which flowed not from this principle) hath been but the invention of thine own imaginary mind (though thou fatheredst it upon the Scriptures, as most men do most of their inventions about doctrine and worship), wherein thou

hast been in a dream of being changed, and yet remainest still the same in nature: and hast had a name that thou hast lived, but art still dead; a name of being sanctified, but still unclean; a name of being justified, but still condemned by the light in thine own conscience; which is one with him who is thy judge, and who will judge according to it: and so, as that which is real taketh place in thee, so that which hath been but imaginary will pass away.

A SHORT

CATECHISM

FOR THE SAKE OF THE

SIMPLE-HEARTED.

QUEST. *What is the estate and condition of all men by nature, as they are begotten of the seed of the evil-doer, and come out of the loins of the first Adam?*

Ans. A state of sin and darkness; a state of death and misery; a state of enmity against God; a state accursed from God; exposed to his wrath and most righteous judgments, both here and hereafter.

Quest. *What brought Adam to this estate? and what keeps the sons of Adam in it?*

Ans. Feeding on the tree of knowledge, from which man is not excluded to this day, though he is from the tree of life.

Quest. *How came Adam at first, and how come men still, to feed on the tree of knowledge?*

Ans. From a lustful appetite and desire after the forbidden wisdom, sown in their hearts by the envious enemy of their souls; who is continually twining about this tree, and tempting men and women to eat of it, persuading them that the fruit thereof is good for food: and indeed it is very de-

sirable to their eye, and promiseth fair to make them everlastingly wise, but still faileth.

Quest. *What is the forbidden fruit?*

Ans. It is knowledge without life; knowledge in the earthly part; knowledge acquired from below, not given from above. This promiseth to make men as God, and to give them the ability of discerning and distinguishing between good and evil, which is God's peculiar property. Eating of this fruit undid Adam, undid the Gentiles, undid the Jews, undid the Christians; they all feeding on the tree of knowledge, and departing from the life in their several dispensations.

Quest. *How doth this fruit undo man?*

Ans. The wisdom and knowledge, which they thus gather and feed upon, perverts them; makes them wise in the wrong part; exalts them against the life; dulls the true appetite, and increases the wrong appetite; insomuch as there is not so much as a desire in them after God in truth; but only to get knowledge and wisdom from what they can comprehend. By this means, whatsoever was afterwards ordained to life, became death to man. Thus the Gentiles liked not to retain God in their knowledge, but fell by their dispensation; provoking God to cast them off, and give them up to the vanity of their imaginations. And thus the Jews, whom God then chose, fell likewise by their dispensation; God for this cause giving them up to their own hearts' lust, and rejecting them from being a people. And the Gentiles, whom God ingrafted into the true olive, in the Jews' stead, they also, after the same manner, fell by their dispensation. Thus each of these fell by gathering wisdom from the letter, but missing of the life in every of these dispensations.

Quest. *What is the food which man should feed on?*

Ans. The tree of life; the word which liveth and abideth for ever, which is in the midst of the garden of God; which word was made flesh for man's weakness' sake, on which flesh the living soul feeds, and whose blood the living spirit drinks, and so is nourished up to eternal life.

Quest. *But had Adam this food to feed on? and was this to be the food of the Gentiles, Jews, and Christians, in their several dispensations?*

Ans. God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul: and nothing less than life itself could satisfy his soul at first, nor can to this day. Every word of God that cometh fresh out of his mouth, is man's food and life. And God speaketh often to man, showing him what is good: but he cannot relish nor feed on this, but desireth somewhat else, through the error and alienation of his mind. And what God speaketh now to man (if that be man's life) Adam had much more of it before his fall. And for the Jews, Moses tells them the word was nigh them, in their heart, and in their mouth: and Paul also tells the Christians so. So that the word is not far from any man, but men's ears are generally stopped against it, by the subtlety of the serpent which at first deceived them.

Quest. *But did not the Jews seek for eternal life, in reading and studying the Scriptures under their dispensation? and do not the Christians now seek for life, and to feed on life?*

Ans. Yea they did, and do in their own way, but they refuse it in God's way. Thus Adam, after he had eaten of the tree of knowledge, would have fed on the tree of life also; but he was shut out then, and so are Christians now. And if ever they will feed on the tree of life, they must lose their knowledge, they must be made blind, and be led to it by a way that they know not.

Quest. *This is too mysterious for me; give me the plain, literal knowledge of the Scriptures.*

Ans. Is not the substance a mystery? Is not the life there? The letter of any dispensation killeth: it is the spirit alone that giveth life. A man may read the letter of the Scriptures diligently, and gather a large knowledge therefrom, and feed greedily thereon; but it is only the dead spirit which so feeds, but the soul underneath is lean, barren, hungry, and unsatisfied, which, when it awakes, it will feel.

Quest. *But may not the dead spirit as well imagine mysteries in every thing, and feed thereon?*

Ans. Yea it may; and the error here is greater than the former: but in waiting in the humility and fear, to have the true eye opened, and the true mystery revealed to the humble and honest heart, and in receiving of that in the demonstration of the spirit, out of the wisdom of the flesh, here is no error; but the true knowledge, which springs from life, and brings life.

Quest. *How may I come at this mystery?*

Ans. There is but one key can open it; but one hand can turn that key; and but one vessel, but one heart, but one spirit, which can receive the knowledge.

Quest. *How may I come by that heart?*

Ans. As thou, being touched with the enemy, didst let him in, and didst not thrust him by, with the power of that life which was stronger than he, and nearer to thee; even so now, when thou art touched and drawn by thy friend (who is nigh), and thereby findest the beginning of virtue entering into thee, give up in and by that life and virtue, and wait for more; and still as thou feelest that following, calling, and growing upon thee, follow on in it, and it will lead thee in a wonderful way out of the land of death and darkness, where thy soul hath been a captive, into the land of life and perfect liberty.

Quest. *But can I do any thing toward my own salvation?*

Ans. Of thyself thou canst not: but in the power of him that worketh both to will and to do, thou mayst do a little at first: and as that power grows in thee, thou wilt be able to will more, and to do more, even until nothing become too hard for thee. And when thou hast conquered all, suffered all, performed all; thou shalt see, and be able understandingly to say, thou hast done nothing; but the eternal virtue, life, and power, hath wrought all in thee.

Quest. *I perceive, by what is said, that there is a Saviour; one which hath virtue, life, and power in him to save; but how may I meet with him?*

Ans. Yea, he that made man pitieth him, and is not willing that he should perish in the pit into which he fell, but hath appointed one to draw him out, and save him.

Quest. *Who is this Saviour?*

Ans. He is the tree of life I have spoken of all this while, whose leaves have virtue in them to heal the nations. He is the plant of righteousness, the plant of God's right hand. Hast thou ever known such a plant in thee, planted there by the right hand of God? He is the resurrection and the life, which raiseth the dead soul, and causeth it to live. He is the spiritual manna, whereupon the quickened soul feeds. Yea, his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, which he that is raised up in the life feeds on, and findeth the living virtue in them, which satisfieth and nourisheth up his immortal soul.

Quest. *But hath not this Saviour a name? What is his name?*

Ans. It were better for thee to learn his name by feeling his virtue and power in thy heart, than by rote. Yet, if thou canst receive it, this is his name, *the Light; the Light of the World;* a light to enlighten the Gentiles, that he may convert and make them God's Israel, and become their glory. And according to his office, he hath enlightened every man that cometh into the world; though men neither know the light that cometh from him, nor him from whom the light comes; and so, notwithstanding the light is so near them, remain strangers to it, and unsaved by it.

Quest. *Why dost thou call him the light? Are there not other names every whit as proper, whereby he may as well be known?*

Ans. Do not thus set up the wise and stumbling part in thee; but mind the thing which first puts forth its virtue as light, and so is thus first to be known, owned, and received. Yet more particularly, if thou hast wherewith, consider this reason: we call him light, because the Father of lights hath peculiarly chosen this name for him, to make him known to his people in this age by, and hath thus made him manifest to us. And by thus receiving him under this name, we come to know his other names. He is the life, the righteousness, the power, the wisdom, the peace, &c., but he is all these in the light, and in the light we learn and receive

them all; and they are none of them to be known in spirit, but in and by the light.

Quest. *How are the other names of Christ known in and by the light?*

Ans. Letting in the light (which convinceth of, and warreth against, sin) the life stirs and is felt; and the life leads to the Word which was in the beginning, and giveth the feeling of that also. And in the Word, the righteousness, the peace, the wisdom, the power, the love are felt; and he is made all these to those who are led into and kept in the light. And when the powers of darkness appear with mighty dread, and there is no strength to withstand them, this lifts up a standard against them, and calms all the tempests, and cures all the wounds and diseases of the soul, anointing it with the everlasting oil; so that now I can sensibly, and with clear understanding, call it my Saviour, the Captain of my salvation, my Christ, or Anointed, my Husband, my King, my Lord, my God.

Quest. *Where doth this light shine?*

Ans. In the darkness at first; but when it hath vanquished, expelled, and dispersed the darkness, it shines out of it.

Quest. *What is that darkness wherein the light shines?*

Ans. Man: man's heart, man's conscience, man's spirit. This is the world, which Christ, the Sun of righteousness, is the light of, in every part whereof he causeth the rays or beams of his light to shine at his pleasure; though in no part the darkness can comprehend the least shining of his light.

Quest. *How then can it ever be converted thereby?*

Ans. The darkness is not to be converted. Every man in this state is reprobated, and the wrath abideth on him. So that the darkness is rejected, and man in the darkness; but man touched by the light, made sensible of it, and following it in the life and power which it begets, is drawn out of the horrible pit, and saved.

Quest. *How may I do to find the light in the midst of the darkness of my heart, which is so great, and this seed so small?*

Ans. By its discovering and warring against the darkness. There is somewhat which discovereth both the open and secret iniquity of the corrupt heart, following it under all its coverings of zeal, holiness, and all manner of voluntary humility and self-righteousness, with which the true light never had unity; and sometimes may cause secret misgivings that all is not well, but there may be a flaw found in this covering, and in the end it may prove too narrow for the soul. This which thus warreth against the darkness, to bring people off from all false foundations to the true and living foundation, this is the light; and thus thou mayst find it, at some time or other, at work in thy heart, if thou mind it.

Quest. *Having found the light, how may I come to feel the saving virtue and power of it?*

Ans. By believing in it. For the virtue and power springs up in the heart that believes in it.

Quest. *How can I believe in it? Am not I dead?*

Ans. There is a creating, a quickening power in the light, which begets a little life, and that can answer the voice of the living power.

Quest. *Yea, if I could find any such thing begotten in me, then I might be drawn to assent that that (though never so small) might believe; but surely my dead heart never can.*

Ans. Hast thou never found a true, honest breathing towards God? Hast thou never found sin not an imaginary, but a real burden? This was from life: there was somewhat begotten of God in thee, which felt this. It was not the flesh and blood in thee; but somewhat from above. And if this had known the spring of its life, and not been deceived from it by the subtlety, it would have fed upon, and have grown up in, the virtue and power of the spring from whence its life came.

Quest. *Why then, by this, all men have power to believe.*

Ans. In the light which shines in all, and visits all, there is the power; and this power strives with the creature to work itself into the creature; and where there hath been the least breathing after life, there hath been a taste of the

power: for this came from it. But the great deceiver of souls lifts up men's minds in the imagination to look for some great appearance of power, and so they slight and overlook the day of small things, and neglect receiving the beginning of that, which in the issue would be the thing they look for. Waiting in that which is low and little in the heart, the power enters, the seed grows, the kingdom is felt and daily more and more revealed in the power. And this is the true door and way to the thing: take heed of climbing over it.

Quest. *What is it to believe in the light?*

Ans. To receive its testimony either concerning good or evil, and so either to turn towards or from, in the will and power which the light begets in the heart.

Quest. *How will this save me?*

Ans. By this means; that in thee which destroys thee, and separates thee from the living God, is daily wrought out, and the heart daily changed into the image of him who is light, and brought into unity and fellowship with the light, possessing of it, and being possessed by it; and this is salvation.

Quest. *We thought salvation had been a thing to be bestowed hereafter, after the death of the body; but if it be thus, then salvation is wrought out here.*

Ans. So it is, even in all that are saved; for there is no working of it out hereafter, but here it is wrought out with fear and trembling; and the believer, who is truly in unity with the life, daily changed from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.

Quest. *But show more particularly how faith, or believing in the light, worketh out the salvation.*

Ans. First, it causeth a fear and trembling to sieze upon the sinner. The Lord God Almighty, by the rising of his light in the heart, causeth the powers of darkness to shake, the earth to tremble, the hills and mountains to melt, and the goodly fruit-trees to cast their fruit; and then the plant of the Lord springs up out of the dry and barren ground,

which by the dews and showers from above, thrives, grows, and spreads till it fills God's earth.

2. In this fear and trembling the work of true repentance and conversion is begun and carried on. There is a turning of the soul from the darkness to the light; from the dark power to the light power; from the spirit of deceit to the spirit of truth; from all false appearances and imaginations about holiness, to that which the eternal light manifesteth to be truly so. And now is a time of mourning, of deep mourning, while the separation is working; while the enemy's strength is not broken and subdued, and while the heart is now and then feeling itself still hankering after its old lovers.

3. In the belief of the light, and in the fear placed in the heart, there springs up a hope, a living hope, in the living principle, which hath manifested itself, and begun to work. For the soul truly turning to the light, the everlasting arm, the living power is felt; and the anchor being felt, it stays the soul in all the troubles, storms, and tempests it meets with afterwards; which are many, yea, very many.

4. Faith, through the hope, works righteousness, and teaches the true wisdom; and now the benefit of all the former trouble, anguish, and misery begins to be felt, and the work goes on sweetly. All the unrighteousness is in the darkness, in the unbelief, in the false hope. Faith in the light works out the unrighteousness, and works in the righteousness of God, in Christ. And it makes truly wise, wise in the living power; even wise against the evil, and to the good, which no man can learn elsewhere.

5. In the righteousness, and in the true wisdom which is received in the light, there springs up a love, and a unity, and fellowship with God, the Father of lights, and with all who are children of the light. Being begotten by Christ, the light, into the nature of the light, and brought forth in the image, there is a unity soon felt with God, the Father, and with those who are born of the same womb, and partake of the same nature. And here are a willingness and power

felt in this love, to lay down the life, even for the least truth of Christ's or for the brethren.

6. Belief in the light works patience, meekness, gentleness, tenderness, and long-suffering. It will bear any thing for God, any thing for men's souls' sake. It will wait quietly and stilly for the carrying on of the work of God in its own soul, and for the manifestation of God's love and mercy to others. It will bear the contradiction and reproach of sinners, seeking their good, even while they are plotting, contriving, and hatching mischief; laying many subtle snares, and longing thereby to entrap the innocent.

7. It brings peace, joy, and glory. Faith in the light breaks down the wall of darkness, the wall of partition, that which separates from the peace, that which causeth the anguish and trouble upon the soul, and so brings into peace. Christ is the skilful Physician; he cures the disease, by removing the cause. The unskilful physicians, they heal deceitfully; crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, while that which breaks the peace is standing: but Christ doth not so, but slays the enmity in the heart by the blood of his cross, so making peace. And this is true peace, and certain peace.

Now finding the clods of earth removed, the enemy, the disturber, the peace-breaker trodden down, the sin taken away, the life and power present, the soul brought into the peace; here is joy, unspeakable joy! joy which the world cannot see or touch, nor the powers of darkness come near to interrupt. Here is now no more crying out, O wretched man! and who shall deliver! &c., but a rejoicing in him who hath given victory, and made the soul a conqueror; yea, more than a conqueror. Wait to feel that, thou who art now groaning, and oppressed by the merciless powers of darkness.

And this joy is full of glory; which glory increaseth daily more and more, by the daily sight and feeling of the living virtue and power in Christ the light; whereby the soul is continually transformed, and changed more and more, out of the corruptible into the incorruptible; out of the uncir-

cumcision, the shame, the reproach, into the circumcision, the life, the glory.

Quest. *Doth the light do all this?*

Ans. Yea, in them that turn towards it, give up to it, and abide in it. In them it cleanseth out the thickness and darkness, and daily transformeth them into the image, purity, and perfection of the light. And this nothing can do but the light alone.

Quest. *What makes men generally so averse from the light?*

Ans. Their unity with the darkness, which the light is an enemy to, discovering and disturbing it.

Quest. *But wise men, knowing men, men who are looked upon as having most light, they also are enemies to this light, and speak hardly of it.*

Ans. Was it not always so? Did any of the rulers, or wise scribes and teachers of the law, believe in him formerly? And is it any wonder if such believe not in him now?

Quest. *What may be the reason why the wise men formerly have not, and now cannot, believe in the light?*

Ans. There are two great reasons for it.

1. Because they cannot comprehend it. They can comprehend the knowledge which they can gather out of the book of nature, or out of the books of the law and prophets, or out of the books of the evangelists and apostles: but they cannot comprehend the light which all these testify of. So that such a kind of knowledge they can receive; but the light they cannot; for it is not to be comprehended; but gathereth into itself, and comprehendeth.

2. Because it is an utter enemy to them. It will not wink at the closest of their evils, nor speak peace to them therein. Their own gathered knowledge may speak peace to them; but this will not. Thus the Jews could speak peace to themselves, from temple, ordinances, and sacrifices; though they walked in the stubbornness and unciscumcision of their hearts, resisting the checks and motions of the Holy Spirit there. And thus the Christians can speak peace to themselves, from a belief and hope through Christ's dying at Jerusalem (though they know not him in them, and are

at a distance, and not one with that in their hearts which is of Christ, and in his power and authority checks and reproves for sin); but the light will not speak peace so, but only where the virtue of the living blood is felt, cleansing away sin.

Quest. *But there are many professors, strict professors, who, without doubt, have once tasted of the living virtue; what makes them such enemies to the light? For there are none speak more against it than they.*

Ans. Because they are fallen from what they once had; for if they were in that living principle, which once gave them a true taste of life through the Scriptures, they could not but know and own the light, which was the thing which gave them the taste, and would have preserved their relish, had they known how to turn to it, and abide in it.

2. The light is a witness against all their knowledge and religious practices, and imitations from the scripture, which they hold and practise out of the light, in the unrighteousness, even in that part which is not to know or be the worshipper. And can ye blame them, that, when the light is so great an enemy to them, they all turn head against it? How is it possible, that having slain and murdered the just one in themselves, they should acknowledge and give him his due honor in others?

Quest. *But have the strict professors, who pretend great things in honor of Christ, murdered him in themselves?*

Ans. Yea, verily, as really as the Scribes and Pharisees and people of the Jews put him to death at Jerusalem: for what they do to the least appearance of his light in their hearts, they do it unto him. Yea, our Lord Christ, at this very day, is as really crucified in their spiritual Egypt and Sodom, as he was without the gates of Jerusalem. And his righteous blood cries as loud against the professors of this age, as ever it did against the Jews; and they are hardened against him by a conceited knowledge, which by their imaginations they have gathered from the Scriptures, just as the Jews were; but the eye in them can no more see it, than the eye in the Jews could.

Quest. *Surely if they knew the light to be the only living way, they would not be such enemies to it.*

Ans. Yea, I believe concerning them (as was said concerning the Jews) that if they knew it, they would not crucify the Lord of glory; for I bear many of them record, that they have a great zeal, though not according to knowledge. But at present very sad is their state; for the god of the world hath blinded the eye in them, which alone can see the truth; and with that eye wherewith they now strive to see, they shall never see with comfort. Yea, so exceeding gross and thick are many of them become, and their hearts so fat, that instead of feeling the want of the spirit of God in themselves, and mourning after it, they can mock at the appearance of it in others; and speak contemptuously of a light within, where Christ saith the light is: for, saith Christ, Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness; for if, &c. Luke xi. 33, 36.

Quest. *But will not they reply, that they do not oppose (much less mock at) the light of the Spirit, but only that which ye ignorantly call the light of the Spirit?*

Ans. If we have found it to be the light of the Spirit, and to work that in us and for us which no other light ever could, do not blame us for giving in our testimony that it is that light. And take heed how ye reproach us with ignorance, seeing many of us have passed through all that which ye call knowledge; but our light is a new and strange thing to you, and ye are not yet able to judge it.

Quest. *But may not men obtain eternal life by reading the Scriptures, without knowing or owning this principle of the light?*

Ans. The true end of men's reading the Scriptures, is to turn them to the light. The Scriptures contain messages concerning God, concerning Christ, concerning the spirit; the end whereof is to turn men to the power and life, which can do the thing for them; which God, which Christ, which spirit, fill all things, and are within in the heart, as well as without. The Word is nigh thee in thy heart, and in thy mouth, saith Moses to the Jews, saith Paul to the Christians.

And to what end do they tell them it is there? But that there they should wait upon it, to hear its voice, and to obey it. Now mark; though men could practise and perform all things mentioned in the Scriptures; yet not being turned to this, they are not in the way of salvation: for the way of salvation is not a peculiar path, or course of ordinances and duties prescribed in the Scriptures; but it is a new way, a living way, a way that the wisest professors out of it never knew (I will lead them in paths they have not known). So that while men know not, nor are turned to, the light and power whereof the Scriptures testify, all their reading of the Scriptures, praying and practising ordinances and duties there mentioned, are but in vain, and in the end will prove but a false covering, and not the covering of the Spirit.

Quest. *But how did men do formerly? for this is but a late notion about the light. Have none ever been saved that have not embraced this notion?*

Ans. I speak not of embracing a notion; but of turning to the thing itself, without which none ever was, or can be saved: for it is that alone can save, and it saves only them that are turned to it. Now if any man so read the Scriptures, as thereby to learn to turn to this, he may feel that which will work salvation in him, though he know not its name. For as darkness, being turned to, works death in a mystery, though its name be not known, but it may appear and be taken for light; so light, being turned to, works life in a mystery, although he in whom it works should not be able to call it by its name.

Quest. *Then by this a man may be saved, though he should not know the literal name Jesus, or the literal name Christ, &c.*

Ans. The names are but the signification of the thing spoken of; for it is the life, the power (the being transformed by that) that saves, not the knowledge of a name. And Christians mightily deceive themselves herein: for they think to be saved by believing a relation concerning Christ, as he appeared in a fleshly body, and suffered death at Jerusalem. Whereas Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and the saving knowledge reveals him, not

only as he was then, but as he was the day before, and will be for ever. And this knowledge is also revealed in the Scripture; but they are so drowned in the letter, wherewith the carnal part is so filled, that the spiritual eye cannot open in them to see: so that which was ordained for life, becomes death to them, and they perish; they perish just as the Jews did; for their eyes are withheld, by a wisdom which they have grown up in from the letter, from the beholding the mystery of life in the spirit, which alone can work out and save from the mystery of death.

Quest. *But did not God formerly work life in men by their reading of the Scriptures, and by the preaching of such godly ministers as are now despised, and accounted antichristian?*

Ans. When men read the Scriptures formerly, in the times of thick darkness, and when some of those (who were not made ministers according to the order of the gospel) preached in the simplicity of their hearts, according to the best light of their feeling and experience, the Lord pitied the simplicity of their hearts, and secretly refreshed this principle in them by such reading, and by such preaching. But now this principle is made manifest, their reading and setting up a knowledge of the Scriptures without this (which was the thing even then from whence they had their life), yea, in opposition to this, this increaseth their death and bondage, and shuts them out of life.

Quest. *Well, I will keep to the Scriptures, and wait for light there, let who will follow this new light.*

Ans. Wilt thou keep to the Scriptures, in opposition to that light, which alone can give the knowledge of the Scriptures? What kind of knowledge wilt thou gather from the Scriptures? Not a knowledge which will humble thee, and cleanse thine heart; but a knowledge that will puff thee up, and fit thee for the slaughter. While thou art from the light, thou canst not know the Scriptures, nor the power of God: but art exalting thine own imaginations, conceivings, and reasonings, without the sense of scriptures. And this thou wilt one day know with sorrow, when God calls thee

to an account for thy boldness, in putting senses and meanings upon his words without his light.

Quest. *I am almost startled.*

Ans. Many have fallen, and more must fall; for the sharp axe of the Lord is prepared to cut down every professor, with all his profession and religious practices, and imitations from scripture, which stand not in the pure life. Happy art thou, if thou now fall by that hand, which now strikes at many in great loving-kindness and mercy, that he might raise them up again, and fix them firm on the true foundation: but miserable are those whose eyes are withheld till the day of their visitation be overslipt, and so they continue keeping their corrupt standing, and confidence in their fleshly knowledge of the Scriptures: for they also must fall; but their fall will be otherwise.

Mind therefore this my single-hearted advice:

Let thy religion be to feel the pure principle of life in the pure vessel of life; for the eye must be pure that sees the life, and the heart that receives it. And faith is a pure mystery, and it is only held in a pure conscience. Know that in thee that purifies thee, and then thou knowest Christ, and the Father, and the Spirit and as that lives and grows up in thee, so shalt thou know their dwelling-place, and partake of their life and fulness.

BABYLON THE GREAT

DESCRIBED,

'HE CITY OF CONFUSION,

IN EVERY PART WHEREOF ANTICHRIST REIGNS;

WHICH KNOWETH NOT THE ORDER AND UNITY
OF THE SPIRIT, BUT STRIVETH TO SET UP AN ORDER
AND UNIFORMITY ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM OF
THE FLESH, IN ALL HER TERRITORIES
AND DOMINIONS.

HER SINS, HER JUDGMENTS.

WITH SOME PLAIN QUERIES FURTHER TO DISCOVER HER; AND SOME
CONSIDERATIONS TO HELP OUT OF HER SUBURBS, THAT
HER INWARD BUILDING MAY LIE THE MORE OPEN
TO THE BREATH AND SPIRIT OF THE LORD,
FROM WHICH IT IS TO RECEIVE ITS
CONSUMPTION AND OVERTHROW.

ALSO

AN EXHORTATION

TO THE POWERS OF THE EARTH,

By Isaac Penington, the Younger.

That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find out? I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason; and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness. And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, her hands bands. He that is good before God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. Eccl. vii. 24, 25, 26.

He that is born of the pure, immortal seed, and lives in the anointing, escapes the golden cup of fornication, and all the painted beds of fornication, and is not defiled with women; Rev. xiv. 4. but remains chaste to the bridegroom.

Lo this is the city which is built up of and filled with images and likenesses of the ways and truths of God, without the life and power.

On her outside there is the likeness of a church, the likeness of a ministry, the likeness of the ordinances, duties, and ways of holiness.

On her inside there is the likeness of the good knowledge, the likeness of repentance and conversion, the likeness of faith, the likeness of zeal for God, the likeness of love to God and his saints, the likeness of the Lamb's meekness and innocency, the likeness of justification, the likeness of sanctification, the likeness of mortification, the likeness of hope, peace, joy, rest, and satisfaction, &c., but the substance, the truth, the virtue of all these is wanting to her; and she herself is found persecuting that very thing (where it is found in truth) the image whereof she cries up.

This, this is the woman that hath bewitched the whole earth for these many generations, and is still changing her dresses and paints, that she might still bewitch people, and sit as a queen reigning over their consciences; but blessed be the light which is arisen to discover, and the power which is able to overthrow this stately, this lofty, this mighty city, and all that take part with it.

The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth in Sion; and antichrist, with his city Babylon, falleth. Sing praises, sing praises, O inhabitant of Sion! to him who subjecteth Babylon, with all her glory, under thy feet.

For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down; the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy. Isaiah, xxvi. 5, 6.

PREFACE.

THERE hath been in me a zeal for God from my childhood, and a most earnest search into the Scriptures (which my soul deeply relished, and my heart honored and loved, and still doth) for the revelation of the mind and will of God. Two things did I earnestly search and beg for: the one was for the discovery of the outward way of worship; the other for the inward life, virtue, and power, which I looked upon the outward as the proper means to lead me to. At the beginning of the troubles in these nations, there was a lively stirring in me, and a hope that God was bringing forth somewhat. I likewise felt the same stirring in many others, at which my heart was rejoiced, and with which my soul was refreshed; but I found it soon begin to flag and wither, which forced me to retire, and to separate from that where I found the life and power dying and decaying. In my separation the Lord was with me; my soul remembereth it right well; and he had regard to the simplicity, honesty, and integrity of my heart, which he himself had kindled in me. And though I fell too soon into a way of church-fellowship and ordinances; yet he had regard to me, and pitied me, and refreshed my life even there. But at length the form overgrew us, and the sweet and precious life in us began to die. Then the Lord found out another way to refresh us (namely, by a sensible relating of our conditions, and of his dealings with us, and workings in us), which was very sweet and precious at first; but the enemy crept in there also. Out of this state I never made any change; but here the hand of the Lord fell upon me, striking at my very root, breaking all my life in sunder, and trampling my crown in the dust. Then I became a man of sorrows (being stripped of all my life, faith, hope, joy, comfort, in one day) not knowing which way to look, nor what to desire. Some-

times there were breathings stirring in me, but they were presently judged; sometimes a little glance of refreshment from a scripture presented to me; but suddenly taken away, and my death and darkness increased thereby. Then should I wish, Oh that I might appear before his throne! for surely my conscience is clear in his sight, and I have not wickedly departed from my God, but was broken in pieces by his hand, even while my soul was earnestly seeking after him. Oh how my soul did mourn, to see how I was fit to be made a prey to every ravening spirit! and many did seek to devour me, but the hand of the Lord was with me, preserving me, though I knew it not. And though I was wholly broken, and desolate of all that I had called, or could call, knowledge (insomuch that I could not call any thing either good or evil), yet the Lord, by a secret instinct, preserved me exceedingly out of that which was evil, and kept my heart secretly panting after the fountain and well-spring of good. Yea, when I was at length (through deep despair of ever meeting with God any more in this life) captivated by the world, and betrayed by the love of it (which at last rose up in me, and gained upon me, by persuading me that my present estate and condition did require the free use of it, and the enjoyment of all it could afford), yet the Lord followed me, and often was I visited with secret loathings of the world, and turnings from it, and pantings after the spring of my life: but these were dreaded by me, and suddenly quenched by the evil part, for fear of that misery and unutterable anguish which I had felt hereby; the remembrance whereof was fresh in me.

In this my courting of the world, and estrangement from the life, the reasoning part (which the Lord had been long battering, and had laid very low) gathered strength in me; and I began to grow wise again, and able to judge of the things of God, and to hope and wait for some great appearance, wherein at length I might be visited, and meet with that which I so vehemently desired, and stood in such need of. Thereby the enemy deeply deceived me, pleasing me herewith, and keeping me hereby from unity with that

which alone was able to give me the sight of him, whenever he should appear. And in this fleshly wisdom I judged and despised the true life in others; as weak, low, and not able to bring them to that which I stood in need of, and waited for. Yea, the more I considered and reasoned in in my mind, and the more I conversed with them (hoping thereby to find some clear ground either of owning or turning from them), the further off still was I; till at length the Lord powerfully touched, and raised up the life in me (which by all these reasonings and consultations, all this while, I slew); and then by degrees (waiting upon that), I saw, I felt, I tasted, I handled, as the Lord pleased to open to me here, that which was shut out from me in my narrowest search and closest reasonings. Thus the Jew in me was cast off, and the Gentile called: but who can read this? I am sure the eye of man's religious wisdom cannot.

Hereby my eyes have been opened, and I have seen the fetters, whereby I have been held captive from my life all my days: yea, many of the streets and chambers of Babylon hath mine eye beheld (in the pure life), wherein the witch dwells which enchanteth from the life: yea, I have heard the tongue of the false prophet, which speaketh so like the true prophet, as no flesh can discern or distinguish between them: yea, I have seen the dragon in the temple, worshipped there for God, by the strictest sort of professors. And now, in tender bowels, in the true light of life, from the pure movings of the eternal spirit (as the Lord pleaseth to guide and direct) do I come forth to visit my poor fellow-creatures and captives in Babylon. And what I have seen and known, I testify for the relief of others, that, if it be possible (by the mercy and good hand of God), they may escape that misery wherewith my poor soul hath been overwhelmed, and may come out of that filthy, abominable city which God is making desolate; where the pure life, the conquering faith, the suffering love, the purifying hope, the putting off of the body of sin, the putting on the living garment, is not and cannot be witnessed, but men are only dreaming of these things in Babylon; where all the satis-

faction they have, is from the pleasure of their dream; but when they awake they will find leanness, and penury, and nakedness upon their souls.

A DESCRIPTION OF BABYLON,

For the Sake of the Daughter of Sion, which at persent dwelleth in the midst thereof.

Now, though the world be deaf and blind (even all sorts of worldly professors, from the highest to the lowest), yet open your ears, and hear the joyful sound; open your eyes, and see the city of desolations, and of all the abominations of the earth (both of flesh and spirit); and feel in yourselves what it is which is to be led out, and what is to lead you; that your feet may be guided to, and set firm upon, Mount Sion; where the life rules over all her enemies.

Babylon *is the spiritual fabric of iniquity; the mystical great city of the great king of darkness; built in imitation of Sion, painted just like Sion, that it might be taken for Sion, and be worshipped there, instead of the true, eternal, ever-living God, and King of Sion.*

This is the seat of the man of sin: where there is a building framed in any heart, or in any society of men, like Sion; there he lodges, there he lives, there he sits as god, there he reigns, there he is worshipped, there he is exalted above all that can truly be called God in that heart, or in that society.

1. *It is a city.* This is a proper parable, to discover the mystery of iniquity by in this state; it is just like a city, in its kind it is a city. In a city there are several streets; in the streets, houses; in the houses, several rooms, to which families and persons appertain; and to all these there are laws and governments. Thus it is here; there are many

streets in this city of Babylon, many houses in every street, many rooms in every house; and the houses and rooms have their several families and persons appertaining to them; and they have their laws and governments, their knowledge of God and Christ; their order, their worship, their discipline in which they walk, and by which they order themselves in their several services, places, offices, and employments, under the king of Babylon.

2. *It is a spiritual or mystical city.* It is not an outward building of earthly materials, but an inward building of inward materials. As the outward Sion, the outward Jerusalem, is passed away in its use and service; so the outward Babylon is out of date too. (Ye need not look so far for it.) And as God hath built up an inward city, a spiritual building; so hath the king of darkness likewise. He could never have tempted from the city of the living God, from the city of the mystery of life, but by the city of the mystery of deceit. And as God builds his city of hewen stones, of squared stones, of living stones; so also hath the king of darkness his hewings, his squarings, his preparations, his qualifications for his buildings. If the light break forth, and make it appear too gross to have the whole nation a church, or to admit a whole parish to ordinances, he will gather a church out of the nation, and select some of his choicer stones out of the parish; yea, he may grasp in some of the stones of the true temple, if they come within his reach and circle; that is, if they look abroad, if they step forth, and keep not close to the anointing within, which is the great and only ordinance of the saints' preservation from antichrist's power: for if they step forth but so much as into a prayer against antichrist, out of this, they are caught in his snare, and are serving him in that very prayer, which they may seem with great earnestness and zeal to put up against him.

3. *It is a great city;* an overspreading city, a city that overspreads the earth. As Sion was a vast city, a city that did overspread the nations (how did the faith of the gospel over-run the world in the apostles' days!) so this city hath also over-run the world. Indeed it hath taken up the whole ter-

ritories and dominions of the other city (and hath enlarged itself further), and Sion hath been laid in the dust, and trodden under foot. And though many witnesses, prophets, and martyrs, have mourned over her, yet none have been able to raise up the tabernacle of David, which hath fallen down, nor to recover Sion to this day; but Babylon hath had the power over her. Look with the true eye, and behold how all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, have been drunk with some or other of the mixtures of this false woman's cup (some of them over, and over, and over again), and have been inhabitants of this city, crying her up (though not all in her gross habit, but some in her more refined shapes and transformings) for the true church, for Sion; whereas, alas! she hath only Sion's dress, Sion's shape, Sion's outward garment (which is the likeness wherein she lies in wait to deceive), but not Sion's spirit.

4. *It is a city of iniquity*, of hidden iniquity. That which is hidden in this city, it is not the life, it is not the righteousness, the holiness of the saints; but iniquity, sin, transgression of the life. Look into any of the streets of Babylon, into any of the houses, any of the rooms, any of the chambers of darkness; there is sin there; there is unrighteousness there; there is not one cleansed heart to be found there; not one pure eye to behold the God of life is to be found there; but in every heart sin in a mystery, iniquity in a mystery, unrighteousness in a mystery. They seem to be for God and Christ, and to be cleansed by them; but uncleanness lodges in them, and sin rules in them against God, and against his Christ in a mystery; which their eye cannot see, and so must needs mistake their state. Yet this is the true state of Babylon, in all the parcels of it; it is the unclean city, where purity of heart and life cannot be known; but though it be washed and transformed ever so often outwardly, yet still it remains inwardly polluted; that which defileth keeping possession and dominion there in a mystery. The living water, the living blood, runs not in any of the streets of this city, so that there can be no true cleansing there. Nay, such strangers are the choicest inhabitants of

Babylon to the fountain of life in Sion, to the river that cleanseth and healeth, that they cannot so much as believe that there is a possibility of cleansing and perfect healing, and making sound and whole here, while on earth. There is great talk of these things (of the water, the blood, the cleansing) in all the regions of Babylon (which hath heard of the fame, and forms to itself a likeness); but the thing itself is not to be found there, and so the virtue, which comes from the thing itself alone, cannot be felt there.

And here, in this there is a great difference between the vessels of Sion, and the vessels of Babylon. The vessels of Sion, they are weak, earthen, foolish, contemptible to the eye of man's wisdom (which cannot look for any great matter of excellency there); but the treasure, the liquor of life in them, is precious. The vessels of Babylon make a great show, appear very holy, very heavenly, very zealous for God and Christ, and for the setting up of his church and ordinances all over the world. Thus they appear without; but they are sepulchres; there is rottenness within: under all this there lodgeth an unclean, an unsanctified heart; a heart unsubdued to the spirit and power of the gospel, while it makes such a great show of subjection and obedience to the letter.

5. *It is the city of the king of darkness*, of the great king of darkness, of *the prince of the power of the air*, who rules universally in the darkness, in the mystery of iniquity throughout, even in every heart. Wherever is sin, there is Satan's throne; and there he hath his laws, his government, his power, in every heart of his dominion. And where there is the least subjection to him, he is yet a prince; his building is not as yet there wholly thrown down; he is not there as yet dispossessed and cast out. As long as there is any thing left wherein he may dwell, he knows his own, and keeps his hold of it. It is his right, and he will not lose it. All sin, all darkness, is properly his: it is his seat, and he hath the government there. Man is the land where these two kings fight; and whatever is good and holy belongs to the one king, and whatever is evil and unclean belongs to

the other; and there is no communion or peace between them; but each keeps his own, and gathers of his own unto himself. And where the fight is once begun between these, there is no quietness in that land, till one of these be dispossessed: but then there is either the peace of Babylon, most commonly under a form of holiness; or the peace of Sion, in the spirit, life, and power.

6. This city was built (and is daily built) *in imitation of Sion, painted just like Sion.* The intent of its building was to eat out Sion, to suppress Sion, to withdraw from the truth by a false image, and to keep her inhabitants in peace and satisfaction, under a belief and hope that it is the true Sion; and therefore it must needs be made like Sion, else it could no way suit these ends. Every street must be like the streets of Sion; every house, like the houses of Sion; every tribe and family, like the tribes and families of Sion; every person, like the persons in Sion; all the laws, ordinances, &c., like the laws and ordinances of Sion; the worship, like the worship in Sion; the faith, like the faith of Sion; the painted Christ, like the Christ of Sion; all that go for truths, like the truths of Sion; they would not deceive else; Babylon would be soon seen through else, and become quickly desolate and forsaken, did she not lay her paint very thick, and with great art and skill. Now here is the wisdom, here is the true eye tried, to see through all the paints of this city, in all the shapes and forms of it; to turn from every street, every house, every chamber, every image and false appearance of truth; every false appearance of ordinances and ways of worship; every likeness of things which this spirit forms from the letter; every duty that it thus calls for; every promise of scripture which it endeavors to apply to that to which it belongs not, that it might lull the soul asleep, and cozen and deceive it of the thing promised; here, I say, is the true eye tried to turn from all this, and to wait for the raising and redeeming of the true seed of Sion, and for the springing up of the true life and power in it and from it: for as long as this spirit can deceive you with any likeness, ye shall never know the truth, nor come

to the worship of the true, living God, which alone is in the spirit, and in the truth.

7. *The end* of all this, of Satan's building up this city, this great city (thus accurately in the power of deceit, and in the very likeness of Sion) was, and is, *that it might be taken for Sion, and be worshipped there as God*, and that without jealousy or suspicion. And he hath attained his end; his city hath deceived and doth deceive, it passeth current for Sion among all the inhabitants of Babylon; almost every sort of people cry it up for Sion, in one appearance or other, though all do not cry up the same appearance; but their own image, way, and worship, every one extols; their own image of the truth, for the truth; their own way of worship, for the way; their own church and family, for the church and family of God. And worshipping here, they worship him, and not the Lord: for the Lord cannot be worshipped in any part of Babylon; but the king of Babylon is worshipped in Babylon, and the king of Sion alone in Sion. Ah! how deeply do men deceive their souls! they think they believe in God, they think they pray to God, and hope to be owned at length by God, and yet are so far from coming out of mystery Babylon, that it was never yet so much as discovered to them; but they have either walked in the way of religion and worship they were brought up in, in the apostasy, or perhaps have removed out of one or two of the broad streets of it, and so thereby think they have left Babylon; whenas the same spirit hath set down in another street of the same city, building up another house by the direction of the king thereof, and there worshipping the same spirit as they did before; but their souls never knew the *fire in Sion, and the furnace in Jerusalem;* by which the very inwards of their spirits must be cleansed, before the pure eye of life be opened which can see Sion.

Now, because ye are more able to receive things from scripture expressions, than from the nature of the thing itself, spoken as it is felt in the heart (concerning which much more might be said, were ye able to bear it), consider a few scriptures.

Babylon is called *a great city*, Rev. xvi. 19. and *a great and mighty city*. chap. xviii. 10. Oh, the power of deceit in that city, to bewitch from the life! Oh, the multitude of lying wonders that are there shown in the heart, to make a man believe that he is in the life! to persuade men that the king thereof is the king of Sion! and that the laws, and ordinances of worship there, are the laws and ordinances of Sion! that the prayer there, is the prayer of the true child! that the believing there, is the true faith! the love there, the true love! the hope there, the true hope, &c. Some parts of Babylon, some likenesses of truth there, are so taking, that none but the elect, by the opening of the eternal eye, can espy the deceit.

And it is a spiritual city, a mystical city, a city built by the working of *the mystery of iniquity*, 2 Thes. ii. 7. whereupon she is called *mystery*. Rev. xvii. 5. It is not a city of plain wickedness, but a city of sin hid; of sin keeping its life under a covering, under a form of godliness; of sin reigning in the heart under zeal, under devotion, under praying, believing, worshipping, hoping, waiting, &c. Where sin lies hid within under these, there is Babylon; there is the mystery of witchcraft; there is the painted throne of Satan; there is spiritual Egypt and Sodom, where the Lord of life is daily crucified. This is the city, the mystical city, the spiritual city. Rev. xi. 8. And here is building up and throwing down continually. She builds; the spirit of the Lord confounds, then down goes her building; then up with another, then down again. This is her course without end, when the spirit of the Lord disturbs her; for otherwise she can settle in any form of knowledge or worship; though in her ordinary course she hath also many changes and turnings; one while this or that being a truth, another while not; one while this or that being the sense or meaning of such a scripture, another while not. Babylon is hardly ever without this kind of building up, and throwing down.

And this city is a great city, a city spread over all the earth. "She made all nations drink of the wine of the cup of her fornication." Rev. xiv. 8. The *woman*, which is this

city, (Rev. xvii. 18.) "sat upon peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Rev. xvii. 15. She sat upon them as queen, as princess, guiding them in their knowledge and worship of the king of Babylon. And those that once hated her, and made war with her, and burnt her flesh with fire, she cozened them with a new paint, got them into her new bed of fornication, and made them worship the king of Babylon again, Rev. xvii. 12, 13. and ver. 16, 17. and there they lay committing whoredom with her, till the time of her last burning and utter desolation; but then they forsook her, for fear of her torment, when they saw the smoke of her burning. Rev. xviii. 9, 10.

In the temples of this city (for in all the streets thereof, yea, in every house, there are temples) antichrist sits as god, and is worshipped. 2 Thes. ii. 4. "He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." He hath clothed himself like God, he appears like God (like the holy, pure spirit of life and power), he appears in the temple of God, he sits there, he rules there, he gives forth laws and ordinances of worship and devotion. Yea, if any one will question his godhead, or his right to do thus, he will prove it, he will make it manifest in the very temple of God, that he is God: "He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." He hath exalted himself into the throne, above all that is called God; he hath got into the temple, he sitteth there as God, and there he maketh it manifest to all his worshippers that he is God; insomuch as, among all the inhabitants of Babylon, he is acknowledged and worshipped, and the true spirit of life is hid from their eyes, and denied and crucified. *He hath showed himself that he is God;* he gives demonstrations of his godhead, which that eye which is out of the life cannot but acknowledge and take to be true. There is none can see and acknowledge the true God, the true Christ, but those that have the true eye, the true anointing ("no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy spirit," 1 Cor. xii. 3.); and yet how many can speak great words of God, and of Christ, who know not what belongs to the

anointing? Alas! alas! all nations and sorts of professors, out of the life, are cozened with the devil's demonstrations, with antichrist's demonstrations, with the whore's demonstrations, with the false prophet's demonstrations, which are undeniable to that wisdom wherein they stand, and to that eye wherewith they look to see.

Now mark this: antichrist's coming, when first perceived, was very mighty, exceeding strong. 2 Thes. ii. 9, 10. "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," &c. Weigh the thing well. Satan used all his art, and all his strength, to conceive and bring forth this mystery of iniquity, so like the mystery of godliness, that it might pass for current in the world, and he rule as God in it. *With all power*, &c., no power of deceit wanting; he did not spare for signs, and lying wonders; yea, he gave power to the beast to do wonders and miracles, even to *make fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men* (which was the sign and wonder whereby the God of Israel was distinguished from Baal; power to work this very sign Satan gives to the beast, to confirm the godhead of the dragon and antichrist with). Rev. xiii. 13, 14. These are the things men look for; see but great power, signs, miracles, they are satisfied. The whole world stands ready to be deceived with this. Yea, and if the eye be not opened in persons, which can distinguish of power, they must needs be deceived. Signs, wonders, and miracles had their place in the first covenant, and were to that part to which the first covenant was; not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. Now after the full demonstration of the truth by signs and miracles, the power of Satan riseth up; and by lying signs, wonders, and miracles overturneth the truth. Now the unbelieving part in man expects and calls for signs and miracles, and says they will determine the controversy, and settle the state of the church again; but that part is not to prescribe God his way; yea, he will steal as a thief upon thee, whose eye is abroad, and looketh for demonstrations without.

And as antichrist got up thus, so antichrist will go out thus. He will raise up this power, and what lying signs, wonders, and miracles he can, to defend himself with, now the spirit of the Lord is risen up to dispossess him, and cast him out of the house which he hath long lodged in. And he that can be cozened with power, with signs, with lying wonders, (which are lying because they come from the spirit of deceit, with an intent to deceive, though they may come to pass, and appear true to man's eye. Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.) or with any of the deceivableness of unrighteousness, shall never come out of Babylon; but only be translated into some of the more refined chambers of it, and fed with some more fresh likenesses of truth, where he shall still remain an inhabitant and worshipper in some image, perhaps of universal love, life, and liberty, and yet be out of the life, out of the love, out of the liberty of the truth, which stands in the power and presence of the spirit of God, and not in the most refined image or likeness.

"All the world wondered after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast." Rev. xiii. 3, 4.

The *dragon* is the devil; the *beast* is that spirit of the earth which he raiseth up, and feeds in men with a form and appearance of truth; to which he gives his power, his seat, and his authority: and every man hath a measure of this according to his state and condition, place and service in Babylon. And now what a man doeth here in religion, be he ever so devout and zealous, and frequent in ordinances and duties, is the worship of this spirit, and of the dragon who sits and rules in this spirit. I am run into hard expressions, very hard, because the nature of these things is hid from men's eyes, and they are in the mist of antichrist's raising, in the smoke which comes from the pit, where there is no opening of the true eye, and no true sight of things; but truly if ever you espy the dragon, the beast, antichrist, the whore, the false prophet, ye must look at home, and read within; and there having found the thing, and seen it in the true light, ye will be able to see it certainly abroad

also. Now do not go about to distinguish these things in the notion of the understanding; but come to feel the life, to unite with the life, and the eye will open which can see into the nature of things, and will behold all in its season; for that eye which is so eager to see, shall never see these things; but that eye alone which waits in stillness and quietness on the pleasure and good-will of the opener.

Now all this time, while Babylon stands, while antichrist sits in the temple, while Satan reigns over all the antichristian world, the true and living God hath not been known, feared, nor glorified; but men's knowledge hath been of a false god they have set up, and him they have feared, and given the glory to, in their worship. Nay, the gospel hath not been preached; the true gospel, the everlasting gospel, the gospel wherein is the light and power of eternal life, to turn men from all antichristian forms of knowledge and worship, to the true life and power: but when Babylon falls, and Mount Sion begins to appear again, then the gospel is to be preached again, even by an angel, who receiveth it from God himself, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. for man could never recover it again: it requires a new inspiration. "The law is to go forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." And this gospel is to be preached "to every nation, kindred, and tongue, and people." ver. 6. Mark: there was not one nation, not one kindred, not one tongue, not one people that kept the everlasting gospel; but it was laid up in Sion; it was carried with the church into the wilderness, and there it hath been hid all the time of the apostasy, since the days of the apostles. But now Sion is redeeming, the true woman bringing back again out of the wilderness, she brings back the true, everlasting gospel with her; and there is an angel chosen in the power of the Lord (even in the same power and spirit that first preached it) to preach it again to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. And the Lord hath so ordered it, that he will have the voice of this angel as despicable to the wise in religion, to the zealous in devotion, of all sorts in this backsliding age, as the former preaching was to the wise and devout both among

the Jews and Greeks. So that whosoever is wise in religion according to the flesh; whosoever is wise in expectation and waitings for the kingdom; whosoever is wise in reasoning about it, and can tell the foregoing signs of it, &c., shall not know the voice: but he that can shut his eyes by the leadings of the pure life, and enter into the hidden womb of wisdom, where the light of life is sown, he shall be new formed, and come forth a child out of the womb of wisdom, with the new eye, the new ear, the new heart, the new understanding and senses; and keeping in the childish simplicity, out of the wisdom, zeal, and devotion which deceived him before, he shall receive and enter into the everlasting kingdom.

Therefore all people wait humbly for the candle of the Lord, that therewith ye may search out Babylon, and may come to see what of her treasures ye have gathered; that ye may throw them away speedily, and give up your ships and vessels (wherewith ye have trafficked for these kinds of wares) to the fire of the Lord's jealousy; that ye may receive the durable riches; that ye may hear the joyful sound of the everlasting gospel, and know the true Christ which it alone reveals; and come to fear and worship and glorify the true God; and not go down into the pit or lake with the dragon, the beast, the whore, and false prophet, which will be the portion of the most zealous false worshippers. And when your eyes come once to be opened in the true light, ye will bless the Lord for giving you these warnings, and not be so angry at us (who have paid dear for them) for our willingness, if it be possible, to save you some of the charges they have cost us: however, at least to preserve your souls from that ruin and dreadful destruction which all the paths of Babylon lead to.

THE SINS OF BABYLON.

Although, in the foregoing description, some of the sins of Babylon have been touched at; yet I find my spirit further drawn forth (in a way of service to the Lord and his people) to take a further view, both of them, and some other of her sins.

THE sins of Babylon, by the spirit of life (which hath righteously measured and knoweth them) are referred to these two heads, fornication and abomination. She allureth the spirit of the creature into a strange bed, and there it acts filthily and abominably with this strange spirit. Now of these there are two sorts; first, some more open and manifest; secondly, some more hidden and secret, hard (yea, utterly impossible) to be discerned, without the shining forth of the pure light of life.

All sorts of men are estranged from the life; under the whole heaven is the Lord God forgotten, and his holy and pure law and way of life; and filthiness and abomination are committed everywhere. Now all this filth (even the common filth of the earth) springs out of Babylon, hath its rise from her womb. Were it not for her, the sound of life would be heard even among the heathen, and they would not be such strangers to him that made them; nor would they act so contrary to those leadings and teachings of the spirit of God (who is the *God of the whole earth*), which the darkest parts are not without. It is she which withdraws their minds from the pure glimmerings that rise up in them, setting up another god in their eyes, and heathenish, sottish ways of fear, worship, and devotion: and under this she makes them filthy and polluted, unclean in their minds and in their bodies, brutish in their knowledge and in their practices; "for she is the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. Rev. xvii. 5. Look what of pride, of

vanity, of cruelty, of envy, of wrath, of lust, of covetousness, of idolatry, of blasphemy, &c., is to be found anywhere among men upon the earth, she is the mother of it all. All the common filth and stench of the earth springs out of this womb, this secret womb, this hidden womb: for though, in this her open and visible appearance, she be manifest to the eyes of many; yet to those children of hers who are thus conceived, brought forth, and bred up by her, she is a mystery of iniquity, and they perceive her not so much as here, and so cannot escape this her openly polluted bed.

Secondly, The whore hath more secret fornications and abominations. Where she can pass thus, she need not paint either herself or her ware; but where need requires, she hath her paint, she hath her delicates for the curious eye. Rev. xviii. 3. She hath her cinnamon, odors, ointments, and frankincense for the nice scent; she hath her fine flour and wheat, &c., for the fine palate; and gold, precious stones, pearl, and vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, for the more stately worshipper; as well as of brass and iron for the more common. Rev. xviii. 12, 13. She can paint both herself and her ware, so as to make them taking to the eye of all flesh. She can so mingle her cup, as shall please every palate but that which is truly living; and cast such a color upon her abominations, as no eye that is without can suspect; but takes with every young man that is hunting abroad, and knows not the spring of life in himself. So that all the deceits in religion, all the several forms and ways of knowledge and worship, all the ordinances, duties, and devotions which the spirits of most men take pleasure in, are of her. And herein are her pride and glory, in subjecting these, in ruling over these, in blinding the eyes of these, and opposing the true life and power by these. She doth not value whole territories of the other so much as the congregation of these. For mark:

The great master-piece of the whore was to paint herself like the Lamb's wife, and so to withdraw from the true church, and set up a false church; which, by reason of its paint and likeness to that which once was the true, should

pass up and down the world, and be taken for the true: and here lie her beauty, her glory, her majesty, her life, her heart, even in the deceivableness of this appearance. Therefore her great care and endeavor are to keep her possession and dominion here. She often reneweth and changeth her paint, nearer and nearer to the image and former likeness of truth, that she might make it pass instead of the truth, and so keep that which is indeed the truth down still under reproach, contempt, and persecution, as she hath done these many ages. Therefore she hath her sorts of paint by her, her varieties of sorcery, of witchery, of enchantments, whereof her cup is full, and wherewith her wine is made strong, to make the inhabitants of the earth drunk thereby; that being thus besotted, being not themselves, but their spiritual senses bound up (as the wine doth very effectually, wherever her cup is drank of,) she might lead them up and down from one thing to another, from one chamber to another, from one bed to another, from one practice and way of worship to another, and still keep them from the true, living thing which their souls seek.

For were it possible for persons who did but so much as read in the Scriptures concerning the power of life the saints formerly enjoyed, the living ministry and ordinances, their sweet walking and fellowship in the light, the presence of the spirit in their worship, and in their whole course, their sincere love in the spirit, and tender bearing with one another's weaknesses, doubts and differences, which he that reads singly cannot but pant after; and the state of the gospel was not to be a decaying and dying in these things, or a losing of them, so that the power of the Spirit, and the revelations thereof should cease (as the whorish spirit, which hath gone out from the life, pleads); but to grow and increase, and the last times to abound most of all with the power and glory of truth: I say, were it possible for persons who should read and entertain the least taste and savor of these things, to be satisfied with any of those dead ways and forms which the whore hath set up instead of them, unless they were wholly bewitched, and altogether deprived

of their senses, being made dead drunk with the whore's mingled wine in this dark night of apostasy? Yea, professors are drunk, they have deeply drunk of the cup, and are sorely overtaken, and their hearts overcharged with strong liquor; which makes them even mad to draw others into their beds of fornication, and to stand up themselves in great rage, and call also to the magistrates for the defence of them. Yea, like the clamorous woman, they make a great noise about ordinances, duties, ministry, church, &c. ("I have decked and perfumed my bed," saith the *lewd woman*, the subtle-hearted woman, Prov. vii. 16, 17.) but do not soberly consider which are painted ones, which the truth. We have run on headily after these things too long; it is now time to stand still a while, and wait for the purging out of the wine wherewith all our brains have been overturned, that we may come into soberness, and into a fit temper to be led by the spirit of life out of the bed of fornications, and out of the ways, worships, ordinances, and duties of fornication, into the bed of the undefiled spirit. Now he that worships God aright, must feel life within, and that life raised and strengthened by him who begets it; and this will savor death; and, faithfully following its guide, will come out of the land of death; even that land wherein all the false worshippers inhabit, and wherein all these false ways and worships, duties, ordinances, ministries, &c., are set up and flourish.

Now these secret sins of Babylon are the same with the more open and gross; the great difference is their secrecy, their not appearing like sins, their paint, their color, whereby they are swallowed down for holy and good. As for instance:

There is fornication (or adultery from the life) in the finest, in the purest way of worship man can invent or imitate: but the fornication doth not so plainly appear here, but they who have drunk of the cup take these things for the ways and appointments of God. Those that set up the whore's church, do not call it so, nor perhaps think it to be so; those that set up the whore's ministry, or ordinances,

do not give them that name, but call them the ministry and ordinances of Christ: yet this is as truly, as really fornication from the life, as the grossest ways of heathenish worship. Oh mark it! mark it!

If thou hast read the Scriptures, and thrust thyself into any practices thou there findest mentioned, without the raising up of a living thing in thee, and without thy following by the guidance thereof, thou hast done this by the whore's advice; and in this thou art committing fornication, and erring from the life: for the true worship lies in the spirit and in the truth, and it is the new birth that God seeks to worship him; but the spirit of man thrusting itself into these things, the Lord abhors and rejects. And this spirit never can be thus cleansed, and fitted to enter into Christ's bed; but only gets a paint from scripture, and enters into the painted bed and bosom of the harlot, where it remains unrenewed, unchanged, unmortified, in the midst of all its great talk and profession of these things. And thus the Scriptures, the holy Scriptures of truth (which were given forth from the pure spirit of life), the whorish spirit maketh use of to estrange from the life. For what sort of persons, which have fornicated from the life, but make use of the Scriptures to maintain their whoredoms by, and to bewitch others into their whoredoms with? Every sort cries up their own way and worship to be the way and worship according to the Scriptures; and if any be gathered out of these witcheries into the power of God, then the bewitched say that such are bewitched.

Then as for all the abominations of the earth, all the filth that defiles the heart, it is to be found on the skirts of the whore, even in her most refined dress: for her religion, her worship, her profession, her practices, do not reach to the purifying of the conscience, but only to paint over the old sepulchre, where rottenness lodgeth within. The sore was never thoroughly searched; the heart was never thoroughly circumcised or baptized; the old man was never put off, or the new man put on; the blood of purifying (which truly washeth away the sin) was never felt in its virtue and power,

but only an apprehension and talk that they are cleansed in Christ, from a notion they have stolen out of the Scriptures; but not from the sensible feeling of the thing in life and power in their consciences. And so the evil nature still remains, the evil heart of unbelief is still to be found in them, and they want the life, they want the power, they want the spirit, they want the love, they want the humility, they want the meekness, they want the patience, they want the innocency and simplicity of the lamb and dove. And when the Lord comes to provoke them to jealousy by the shining of his light, and by the appearance of his power in some whom they despise, then the pride, the passion, the envy, the heart-burnings, the hard speeches, the false surmisings, with the rest of the enmity which still abides with them, stirs and rises against the life and power, and their hypocrisy is made manifest. Yea, some of the strictest among them can scoff and jeer at the appearance of life; so strong is the evil and unmortified nature in them, and so conceited are they in their ways and practices, because of their cover, under which all this iniquity, for the most part, lies hidden from their eyes. But, for all that, it is there; the Lord's candle will search it out, and thine own eye shall see it, and find in thyself bloody Cain, scoffing Ishmael, profane Esau, the uncircumcised Jew; who is angry that his brother's sacrifice is accepted, and his not; who disdains and derides the true seed of life, the living heir; who hunts abroad for food pleasing to that nature which is to be famished; who crucifies the Lord of glory because of his meanness, and because he appears not in that way of devotion and holiness wherein they expect him. Neither will he appear so; but to overturn all that which ye have set up, and to set up that which ye disdain. This is the Lord's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

Now there are several sins which the spirit of the Lord hath charged Babylon with, and which he will reckon with her for, and with all that partake with her therein; some whereof I may mention, as:—

1. *Her deep fornications from the life, under a pretence of*

hon oring and worshipping of it. (Be not offended that I begin with it again, seeing it is also mentioned among other particular sins of hers. Rev. ix. 12.) She speaks fair words; she calls to have the worship of God set up, and a godly ministry, and the ordinances of God in a nation; but the thing is not so in the sight of God, but in all this she seeks the advancement of her own whoredoms. And this was, and this is, the very way of antichrist's rising; he gets into the form, he cries up the form; and by the form which he cries up, he eats out the power. If antichrist should speak directly against the power (without first creeping into, and setting up a form, and crying up that) he would soon be detected: but, under a form and profession of truth, he hides himself, and covers his spirit of enmity and persecution therewith; and here he can secretly and safely smite the innocent, and fight against that very spirit, life, and power, which he himself, in his form, makes a profession of being subject to. And this is the wolf in the sheep's clothing, which, by this fair appearance of the sheep's wool on his back, covers his ravenous nature from the eyes of the beholders.

Now there are three ways of fornication, one of which this spirit is always guilty of, sometimes of them all.

1. *By inventing things which the Lord never commanded, or adding to that which the Lord did command.* The mind of man is very busy, and full of inventions; and where the heart is touched with devotion and zeal towards God, the inventing part exceedingly exerciseth itself this way, either in imagining and forming somewhat which it thinks may be acceptable to God, or in adding to those things which it finds commanded. In this way of fornication the popish church abounds, being filled with ceremonies of their own inventing, and of additions to such things as are found mentioned in the Scriptures. The common Protestants also have been too guilty here.

2. *By imitating of those things which were commanded to others.* When a man finds in scripture the things which some others did, or which they were commanded to do; and so he is venturing upon them before he feels the leading of that

spirit whereby they were led thereunto. Now in this he errs from the life; he goes without his guide; he doeth that which was a good thing in others (who were led by the spirit thereto), but in him it is fornication. This man is a thief and an intruder; he steals into the outward knowledge and practice, without the inward life and power: he intrudes into that into which others were fairly led; not coming in by the right door, for which entrance he should have waited, and not have run on headily of himself. This way of fornication the strictest among the Protestants have generally been ensnared in, who have run on further and further to search out the purest way of worship, the nearest pattern to the primitive times, and so have applied themselves diligently thereto, not knowing what they were to wait for to be their guide, and give them the entrance. And here now, thinking themselves to be in the right, they have contracted a lofty spirit (and held forth their conceptions of the way as the only way), and so have lost the meekness and simplicity, which were fresh and lively in some of them before; which sets them a great way back, and makes the entrance into the kingdom very hard to them. Whereas if that simplicity and tenderness were fresh in them, the Lord would show great regard to that, easily pardoning this their error, and, in mercy to them, visiting that evil spirit with his judgments, which stood nigh them, and was the cause of their error. But they are grown high, they are grown wise, they are become confident, they know the way already, and can maintain it by undeniable arguments (as they think) to be the way; so the Lord, with his teachings, is at a great distance from them; that lying very low in them, which the Lord alone will teach.

3. *By continuing in practices, to which they were once led by the spirit, without the immediate presence and life of the spirit.* For the whole worship, the whole religion of the gospel, consists in following the spirit, in having the spirit do all in us, and for us: therefore whatsoever a man doth for himself is out of the life, it is in the fornication. If a man pray at any time without the spirit, that prayer is fornication, and

is not either acceptable to God, or profitable to himself; but grieves the spirit, hurts the life, and wounds the soul. Now this way of fornication have they especially fallen into, who have been acquainted with the true leadings and openings of the spirit, and have afterwards run to them for refreshment, and so by degrees forgot the spirit that opened. And by this means was that life, which was precious and very savory in the ranters (before they were seduced by the spirit of deceit into that way of ranting) overturned. And thus they also (who deeply saw into the mystery of whoredoms, and into the more inward ways of fornication above others), even they also were deceived with the whore's cup, and drank afresh of that wine of fornication which the whore very cunningly had new mingled for them; and they also are become a reproach to the inhabitants of Sion, who find a living habitation in that spirit of life which they turned from.

Now if there be a true eye opened in any in the reading of this, how easily and manifestly will he see whoredom, fornication, adultery, generally in men's religious practices, in their churches, in their ministries, in their ordinances, in their prayers, in their whole course! Oh how, think ye, doth the eye of the jealous God behold these things! but your eyes, who are held captive here, cannot see it. The God of the world, with his mists, hath darkened you; the great whore, with her sorceries, hath enchanted you; and ye are her slaves, ye are drunk with her cup; and how can ye judge soberly either of your own estate towards God, or concerning your practices in religion?

2. *Her notorious blasphemies.* Having fornicated from the life, and from the spirit, then she blasphemes the life, and the holy, pure power and movings of the Spirit. "The woman which sat upon the scarlet-colored beast (with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication) was full of names of blasphemy." Rev. xvii. 2, 3. Yea, the beast which carried her, which had many heads, horns, and crowns, he also had on his heads "names

of blasphemy." Rev. xiii. 1. "And there was given to him a mouth, speaking great things, and blasphemies." ver. 3. And he, with the whore together (for he did it by her spirit and instigation, by virtue of the wine he had drunk out of her cup) "opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." ver. 6. This hath been the work of the tongue, in every head of the beast; namely, to blaspheme the life, to blaspheme the true, living power, in all ages and generations, since the apostasy from the life and spirit of the apostles.

Now there is a twofold blasphemy, which the whore, and the powers of the earth that serve her, are guilty of.

1. There is a speaking well of the ways of their own invention, or the ways which they have imitated without the life. To call these the ways of God, the true ways of life, is blasphemy. "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but a synagogue of Satan." Rev. ii. 9. There were, even in the apostles' days, persons who pretended to be Christians, and pretended still to be of the church, though they had lost the life; and this the spirit of the Lord said was *blasphemy*. And what is their gathering into a church, who were never gathered into the life, and setting up ordinances, and pastors? What is this? What is it for him to call himself a Christian, or inward Jew, who never had the foreskin of his flesh cut off by the circumcising knife of the spirit? What will the Lord say this is, when he comes to judge?

2. There is a speaking evil of the truths of God. The true knowledge, the true fear, the true worship, the true saints, the true God, the true tabernacle, the true temple, the true heaven, (all which is in the spirit, and is alone revealed and seen there) these are reproached, these are misrepresented (and the true sight and acknowledgment of them called error, heresy, and sectarianism) by all the blasphemers of Babylon.

Israel, who had the law and the prophets, the true ordinances and the true priests, yet they "called evil good, and

good evil; they put darkness for light, and light for darkness; they put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." Isa. v. 20. "They were so wise in their own eyes, and so prudent in their own sight; they were so mighty to drink wine, and men of such strength to mingle strong drink (justifying the wicked for reward, and taking away the righteousness of the righteous from him)," that there was no convincing of them by the LIGHT of GOD, shining from the prophets, of their "casting away the law of the Lord, and despising the word of the Holy One of Israel." ver. 21 to 25. Nay, they were observers of the law, and hearkened to the prophets and the priests of the law. Jer. v. 31. Therefore, when the *overflowing scourge* came, *it should not come near them:* yea, when the true prophets of the Lord threatened them with his coming with dreadful vengeance, and his *strange work*, they, in the height and confidence of their spirits, could reply, "Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it." Isa. v. 19. How blind were they from seeing their blasphemies; their calling of evil good, and good evil, &c. Yea, in the very days of the apostles, *the way of truth was evil spoken of*, and synagogues of Satan setting up, and blasphemies growing up apace from those which held the true form, but denied the power, even while the pourings-forth of the Spirit, and revelations from the Spirit, did abound: how can it be expected it should be otherwise now, when the Spirit is grown such a strange thing, that to mention such a thing as being moved by the Spirit, or acted by the Spirit, is become ridiculous? and the very teachers of the nation (who must speak by the Spirit, if they speak the word of God) cry revelation is ceased, and count it a reproach for a man so much as to pretend to speak by the movings, and in the power, of the Spirit.

Now this double blasphemy necessarily follows the fornication: whoever is fornicated from the life, he blasphemes the life, in all his knowledge, in all his worship, in all his religion. He calls that prayer which is not prayer; that an ordinance which is not an ordinance; that a church which is not a church; that a minister which is not a minister;

and that which is indeed the prayer, the ordinance, the church, the minister, he denies and blasphemes; and cannot do otherwise, until the righteous judgments of the Lord purge the whore's wine out of him, and he be led back to that life and spirit again, from which (in all these ways of worship, inventions, and imitations) he is gone a whoring.

The whore, for these many ages, hath been laying blasphemy to the charge of such as, in any degree, have been led by the spirit of the Lord from her whoredoms; but now the Lord is taking it off from them (who have long been unjustly charged therewith), and charging it upon her, and she cannot escape his judgment; for though she put on ever so fine dresses and appearances, like the spouse and church of Christ, yet the Lord can distinguish and find out his spouse, though naked in the wilderness, and without her attire; and can also espy the whorish spirit, though clothed with the church's attire; and can charge her blasphemies (against him, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven) upon her.

3. *Gross or more refined idolatries.* "Little chidren," said John, "keep yourselves from idols." 1 John v. 21. He saw antichristianism breaking in apace, many antichrists being already come; and now (saith he) keep to the anointing, and keep from idols. Without a very strict watch, without a mighty preservation by the anointing, he saw idolatry would even creep in upon them, who had tasted of the true power and virtue of life. But how shall they keep from idols, who know not the anointing, but think the revelations thereof are ceased? He that buyeth not the tried gold of Christ, (Rev. iii. 18.) how can he avoid buying untried gold of antichrist, or silver, or brass, or wood, or stone, which his merchants traffic for, and make idols of? Rev. ix. 20. If thine eyes be anointed with the true eye-salve, thou mayest see and read the parable.

Idolatry is the worshipping of God without his spirit (that is the plain, naked truth of the thing). To invent things from the carnal mind, or to imitate things, which others, who had the spirit, did in the spirit, by the command of the spirit, for

thee to imitate and practise these without the spirit, is idolatry. An invented church, an invented ministry, an invented worship; an imitated church, an imitated ministry, an imitated worship, without the life, without the spirit, all these are the *work of men's hands*, and are *idols*, and all that is performed herein is idolatry. Rev. ix. 20. This is a religion without life, a worship without life, a fabric for idolatry; and the whole course of worship and service in it, is idolatry. For the living God, the Lord God of endless life and power, is alone worshipped by his spirit, and in the truth of that life which he begets in the heart; and all other worship, though ever so seemingly spiritual, is idolatrous. Ah! professors, professors! if ye knew how many idol-prayers and services ye have loaded the Lord with, and how ye have been whoring from him, while ye have seemed to be drawing nigh to him, ye would hang down your heads and mourn! for whatever ye have done in the worship of God, without the leading and presence of his spirit, it hath been idolatry. For the worship of God, under the gospel, "is in the spirit and in the truth," and required of them who are in the spirit and in the truth, and not of others. John iv. 23. For them alone the Lord seeketh to worship; and the Lord will admit of none to his worship, but such as he seeks. And if any else will thrust themselves into his worship, it is not accepted; nor do they worship the true God, but they "worship they know not what;" and their whole state and course here is a state and course of idolatry.

4. *Sorceries, witchcrafts, divinations, and enchantments* (I do not mean outward sorceries or witchcrafts; they are but the shadow or figure of the inward mystery of deceit of this black, dark spirit, which appears as an angel of light, that he might bewitch and deceive). "Neither repented they of their sorceries." Rev. ix. 21. This false church, this adulterous woman, she hath her golden cup, and her wine mingled; and with this cup she bewitches the eye, with this wine she inflames the heart, and intoxicates the brain. She invents ways and worships like to the true, or she imitates the true ways and appearances of life; and when the poor,

simple young man is singly seeking after God, from some true touches of his life, before he comes to know the spirit of life, before he can come to be married to the Lamb, she comes with her golden cup, and with her tempting wine, and bewitches the poor heart therewith, and so leads it aside into her painted bed. Wouldst thou enjoy God? saith she. Wouldst thou worship him aright? Wouldst thou have fellowship with him? Lo, here is the way; here is the church; here are the ordinances; here is the ministry; here are the means. Thou must wait upon God in the use of the means, and these are they. Did not the saints formerly do thus? Did not they meet with God here? Did not they serve and worship God thus? Come thou hither also; do what they did; enjoy what they enjoyed. Yea, but thou whorish woman, did ever God appoint means without his spirit? Thou leavest the main, yea, indeed, the only thing behind thee, which itself alone is accepted, and without which nothing is accepted. And this is the course of the whore; in all her transformings, in all her baits, in all her temptings, she still leaves the spirit behind her. She may perhaps speak of the spirit, to hide herself the more (because the letter of the scripture is so express therein); and teach people to look and wait for the spirit, but so as it never is to be obtained: for he that begins in religion either to pray or worship, or seek the knowledge of God, without the spirit, shall never meet with the spirit so; but that way of knowledge, religion, and worship of his, must first be broken down, and he become a fool, and receive the spirit as a fool (out of all his religious knowledge and wisdom which he had gathered before); and afterwards, following the spirit which is thus received, he shall be led into the true wisdom. Now mark that which follows, ye that have a desire to understand.

This spirit of deceit, this whorish spirit, this spirit of divination and witchcraft ("which by her sorceries deceived all nations," Rev. xviii. 23.) came forth curiously decked at first, with all manner of *deceivableness of unrighteousness.* It had the exact form of life (the true form of godliness) and a

lively spirit in it: it had the form of knowledge, and the form of worship, and with these it came to tempt, and draw away them from the life and from the power who were in the life and in the power; and it did prevail upon such as kept not close to the anointing. But after it had overcome, and gained the church's territories, then it might safely corrupt the form; and so it did, and went into multitudes of inventions and fopperies (as at this day may be seen amongst the Papists). Now these are easily discovered, and seen through by any simple, plain, honest eye, upon a little breaking forth of the light. Therefore the whorish spirit, when she perceives herself found out here, she changes her shape and attire, and comes back again by degrees (as need requires) to the forms of knowledge and worship, wherewith she was arrayed when she deceived at first: yet still she is the same, and doeth this to keep poor, simple hearts still in her bands, from the life and from the spirit. And thus painted, thus decked, thus holding forth scripture-knowledge and scripture-ways of worship, she is the more subtle witch, the more subtle sorceress, and is able to deceive any eye, but that which is opened in the light. With her "Lo, here is Christ, and lo, there is Christ," she would deceive the very elect, if it were possible; but it is not possible: for they are taught by the spirit not to go forth, and the anointing within preserves them. And he that knoweth not this preservation is bewitched by her; and his fear of God is such as may be taught by the precepts of men, and practised without the knowledge of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is the saints' rule, guide, and preservation. For as the apostles were "able ministers, not of the letter, but of the spirit of the New Testament," 2 Cor. iii. 6. so they that received their ministry (or that which they ministered) received not the letter only, but the spirit; and were preserved not by the letter, but by the spirit, and were made able to try words, things, and spirits, not by the letter, but by the spirit. But this the whorish spirit is departed from, and bewitcheth others from; first possessing them that the spirit is not to be looked for, and then persuading

them to make as good shift as they can without it: and then (having thus prepared people) she brings forth her wares. Look ye, saith she, this is the way; thus and thus the saints practised; do thou thus also. But thou must receive the saints' spirit before thou either know or worship; or thou knowest and worshippest out of it: and in that path of sorcery and witchcraft from the life, thou shalt never meet with the life; but the further thou proceedest therein, wilt be more and more estranged from it, and become still a greater and greater enemy to it, and more and more in love with the whore, and her whorish paths and pleasing ways of devotion, whereby the false spirit in thee is raised up and nourished; not with the bread of life from the hand of the spirit, but with words, or forms of knowledge, or ways of worship invented, or imitated; which do but tickle the understanding, or affectionate part of man, but reach not the life; so that that which should serve the Lord, is there not raised, but still bound over with the bond of iniquity.

5. *Luxury, excess, and pleasure.* She is rich with her merchandize, and she enjoys it to the full, she takes the pleasure of it. She builds costly houses, wears rich apparel, fares deliciously (read spiritually with the spiritual eye). She is rich in knowledge, rich in ways of worship, rich in duties, rich in religious performances and practices. And as she gained these in her own will (without the leadings of the life), and by her own search and wisdom; so she can make use of these in her own will, and according to the direction of her own wisdom. She can fast when she will, give thanks when she will, preach when she will, pray when she will, sing when she will, meditate when she will, bring forth her knowledge to others when she will. Look on the Papists; how rich are they in outward buildings, in gorgeous ceremonies, in times of worship, in ways of mortification and penance, in fasts, in feasts, &c. Look on the several sorts of Protestants; they have their riches in their kind too; their churches, their buildings, their arts, their sciences, their languages, their bodies of divinity, their cases of conscience, &c. They can open the whole body of religion,

resolve all doubts, expound all scriptures, &c. "The great city was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls." Rev. xviii. 16. And she sat thus on the throne like a queen, living deliciously, and taking her pleasure, to which her torment and sorrow afterwards are proportioned. ver. 7. Yea, she had treasure and costliness enough to make all her merchants rich that would trade with her. ver. 19. What knowledge, what delicate food, could the wisest or greatest of the earth desire, which she had not ready for them? (see ver. 3. and ver. 9.) But Sion, all this while, hath lain in the dust, and been despised: she hath had no building, no fence, but hath been trampled under foot by every unclean beast: her witnesses have been clothed with sack-cloth (a garment which all the lofty inhabitants of Babylon disdain): her fare hath been hard in the wilderness, only a little manna (which, with the fleshly Israel, who lust after rich and large knowledge, is counted light bread, and their souls soon loathe it): nor had she this in plenty, but only a small proportion daily, from the hand of the free Giver, sufficient to keep life in her in the wilderness, and to furnish her with strength to give in her testimony against Babylon, so far as the Lord saw good to call any of her seed thereunto. Now what professor can be willing to fare thus with her at present, and to wait for her future riches, fulness, beauty, and glory? Nay, nay; they have so long lived richly, and fared deliciously in Babylon, that they know not how to eat the bread of affliction, and drink the water of affliction, with sad and desolate Sion: and yet this is the only way and passage out of Babylon into Sion. That which hath been rich and fat, and full-fed there, must become poor and lean, and feel hunger, and have none of the bread of life administered to it; no, not so much as husks either. And in this sad day, and state of misery, the poor are visited, which receive the gospel; and the dead raised, which receives the life.

6. *Worshipping of the devil.* "All the world wondered af-

ter the beast, and they worshipped the dragon." Rev. xiii. 3, 4. Now the dragon is the devil. Rev. xx. 2.

There is no other worship of God under the New Testament, but in spirit and truth; and he that worships otherwise, worships not God, but that spirit which teacheth to worship out of God's spirit, and out of the truth. Every prayer is not a prayer to God, but only that prayer which is from and in the spirit. Every ordinance, or duty, is not an ordinance of God, or a duty performed to God; but only that which the spirit leads into, and guides and preserves in. This is the way that all the earth have departed from the Lord; namely, by erring from his spirit. They cry up practices in religion; duties, ordinances; the means, the means; a church, a church (as the Jews did "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;") but they find the church, before they have found the spirit of the Lord; and so they find not the church that is in God, the church that is of his building; but they, poor hearts! frame up a building as well as they can, according to the pattern they find in the Scriptures; and so they are not a habitation for God in the spirit, but are estranged from the life and spirit in all their worship; and so are not found by the spirit (which searcheth them and their worship) worshipping of God, but "the works of their own hands, and devils." Rev. ix. 20. For that charge holds good against all the inhabitants of Babylon, even to the highest and strictest of them all, whether in forms, or out of forms. There are many men, who are very zealous and devout in their ways of worship, who were never taught by the spirit the way of worshipping God, nor do at all know how to worship in the spirit: these my soul exceedingly pities. They have received into their understandings, from the letter of the scripture, that God is to be worshipped in spirit, and that God will give his spirit to them that ask it. They have asked, and they hope that they have the spirit; but poor, deceived hearts! they know not what spirit they are of, nor in what spirit they act, nor what spirit they serve; and so perish for *lack of knowledge*,

the key whereof hath been hid from them. Now let such consider:

There are but two spirits; the spirit of God, and the spirit of Satan: one of which guides all men in their devotion and religion, and one of which they serve therein. He that is led by the spirit of God; he serves God, he worships God: he that is led by the spirit of Satan; he serves not God, but that spirit which appears in the temple of God, like God, and gives such demonstrations that he is God, as no flesh can deny. 2 Thes. ii. 4. Here now is the great *deceivableness*. In profaneness, in manifest wickedness, Satan is easily seen; and men that are found here, it is granted that they are serving the devil: but that he should sit as king in gathered churches, in duties, in ordinances, in ways of self-denial and mortification, and be worshipped here, this is hard to be seen: yet any of these which the spirit of the Lord leads not into, or which are performed at any time without his spirit, he is worshipped in. Consider this, ye that are wise in religion, and are diligently reading the Scriptures, and gathering knowledge, and rules of worship, and applying promises, &c. Do ye this in the life and spirit of God? or in your own wisdom, and according to your own understanding? Doth not the wisdom of that spirit, which is out of the truth, guide you in your searchings after truth? Oh, do not serve that spirit which the Lord hates, but come back to that, from which, in all this, ye err, and which, in all this, ye cannot serve and worship. And let not your religion any longer consist in mere practising what the saints formerly practised (for that ye may do without the same spirit), but in yielding up to that life, power, and pure spirit that they were led by. And when ye are joined to this, then do not prescribe the Lamb the way that he should go, but "follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth." Do not tell the Shepherd (by your gathered wisdom) the way that he must lead you in; but know the voice, and follow it: for this I can truly testify, that if once ye come in faithfulness and true light to follow the Lamb, he will lead *in paths ye have not known*, and out of the paths ye have known.

7. *Compelling of others to worship.* Rev. xiii. 15, 16. The false woman and the beast set up a worship in the will, and they do not know why any in the will also may not be subject and submit to it. They can give them reasons, they can give them arguments from scripture; and if they will not yield to these, they are to be looked upon as stubborn and refractory, and to be compelled by outward force. This hath been the course generally throughout the land of Babylon; but these show hereby that they themselves are erred from the truth (and therefore very unfit and unlikely to teach it others): for that which God works upon is the conscience, which he convinceth by the light of his spirit; and no other light can truly convince it. That therefore which would have a man yield to any practice, or way of worship, till he be truly convinced, is of the devil. "My son, give me thy heart," saith Christ, the wisdom of God: come not to me with oblations and sacrifices, but give me thy heart. My son, give me thy knee, give me thy obedience to the ways I have set up, give me thy conformity, saith antichrist, saith the adulterated wisdom: and if any refuse, she endeavors to compel them. Thus, like "Jeroboam the son of Nebat," she makes (that which she calls) Israel to sin: or, like Nebuchadnezzar, she sets up an idol, and causeth all her children to bow to it. Thus the load of the iniquity of multitudes lies upon that scarlet whore, who forces her cup of abominations and filthiness upon all she can, Rev. xvii. 4. causing all, *both small and great*, in all her territories, to *receive her mark, and worship her image.* The work of the minister of Christ is to keep the conscience tender, that the voice of Christ may be heard, and the law of his spirit of life (which makes obedient to the God of life) spring up there: but this is the image, here is the way, bow, conform, say the ministers of antichrist. But we are not convinced in the sight of God that this is the way, say poor souls. It is your own fault; ye may be convinced if ye will, say the ministers of antichrist; we are ready to give you arguments and scriptures to convince you; how is it ye are not convinced? Ye must be convinced, otherwise the magistrate

must deal with you. Thus they endeavor to harden the conscience, that they may sit upon it and ride it, and terrify it from its subjection to its only true and lawful king. Oh, the havoc that hath been made of souls by this means! the Lord is requiring it of this generation.

But let me put this question to all the learned and wise, in all the regions of Babylon, under what painted form or way soever. Can any worship God aright, before they be truly convinced of his will and way? Can any be convinced without his light and spirit? Were it good and acceptable in the sight of God, for any persons to run into that way, whereof thou sayest thou art convinced that it is the way, before they themselves are convinced? If it be not good and acceptable, what is that which goes about to compel them? Away with thy carnal weapons; and if thou wilt draw to God, draw by that which is spiritual: but if thou wilt still be using outward force (running to the laws of men, and power of the magistrate), the Lord hath opened an eye, which discovers thy nakedness herein, and is able to make it manifest in the sight of all people; and thou shalt not long cover thy shame. The Lord's people shall "be a willing people," to follow him "in the day of his power;" but all the Lord's people have been unwilling to follow thee in the day of thy power, which is near an end; and the very fountain of thy deceit, and tyranny over the conscience, is opening and making manifest.

8. *Persecution* of such as she cannot compel to her worship. She sets up her form of knowledge, she sets up her way of worship, and those that will not be drawn to own the one, and practise the other, she sets her brand upon them for erroneous persons, schismatics, heretics; they must not "buy or sell." Rev. xiii. 17. They must be banished or imprisoned, or perhaps put to death; for she is hardly satisfied, till she hath drunk the blood of those, who, in any eminent degree, are the witnesses of Christ against her. Rev. xvii. 6. This was a thing wondered at by John, with great admiration; to see this woman, this great city, out of which all the venomous darts are shot against the saints and

martyrs of Jesus, under a pretence of zeal for the church and ordinances of Christ. For this is the engine, whereby the dragon makes war with the true woman's seed, (*which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*), even by this false woman which rides on the beast, by whose power and strength she overcomes the saints. She sets up a way of doctrine, a way of worship in a nation, and gets laws made for the defence of it, and against them that will not submit to it; and here she is too hard for the saints; by this means she overcomes the martyrs and witnesses, and keeps the truth down, and keeps up her way of deceit; which, without this prop, would soon fall.

This whorish spirit scents the spirit of the Lord; she knows it will soon be her death, if she cannot make it appear odious, and suppress it: therefore she hunts this spirit, she hunts the life and power of what she herself professes (especially if it appear vigorous and strong in any); she seeks advantages against the servants of the living God, representing them to the earthly powers as persons of dangerous principles and bad practices, inventing all manner of what can be called evil against them, and spreading it among the people, that the truth may start up nowhere in the earth, but everywhere be knocked down by the violence of the multitude, or by the sword of the offended magistrate. Now what is the matter of all this great noise and fury? Why this; *A lamb is risen up in the innocency; the pure harmless spirit is appearing in the earth; the true life* (which discovers the hypocrisy, and dead forms and ways of the whorish spirit) *is breaking forth:* therefore she makes a great outcry: Awake, people! awake! the church is in danger: arise, magistrates! magistracy and ministry will down, if this lamb-like spirit be suffered. Nay, nay: these shall stand, but Babylon shall fall, and her *mystery of iniquity* be discovered, and her *deceivableness of unrighteousness* made manifest; and the true life and spirit shall arise and take possession of the hearts of people, and make them a clean and fit habitation for God: and people that are subject hereto, shall feel it, and enjoy it; though the merchants of Babylon say, men

shall never be made clean while they live, but must still have a body of sin and death hanging about them. But how shall they put on Christ, who have not put off the body of sin? Shall those who are made kings and priests to God here on earth, minister in their filthy garments?

These are some of the sins of Babylon, that painted harlot, which is subtle in heart, and lies in wait to deceive, in the absence of the true church, whose clothing and resemblance she takes up, and appears in.

And when she had done all this; when, like Egypt, she hath kept the seed in bondage in all her territories and dominions, in every church she hath set up, and by all her ministries and ordinances; when, like Sodom, she hath filled the whole world with filthiness, uncleanness, and all manner of spiritual abominations; when, like old Jerusalem the bond-woman, she and her children have scoffed at the spirit in every appearance, all the time of her reign, and have trampled upon and domineered over them, who have but spoken of the coming of the just One in his people, sporting herself in her own deceivings; yet, after all this, *she wipes her mouth, and saith she hath done no harm;* she hath been for the gospel, and church, and ministry, and ordinances, and the faith once delivered to the saints, and only against deceivers, seducers, blasphemers, and heretics. But the spirit of the Lord cannot be thus deceived; nor shall the nations be always thus deceived, and suffer her to sit as a queen upon their consciences; but she shall see sorrow, and they shall taste joy at the sound of the everlasting gospel, when once again it cometh to their ears. Rev. xiv. 6. and chap. xix. 6, 7.

THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON.

Babylon the great, this great city of abominations, which hath reigned over the whole earth, which hath bewitched all sorts of professors with the golden cup of her fornications, which hath subtly led from the life, and held all sorts captive in the witchery of her deceit, and hath triumphed over

the holy seed, making Sion, their mother, desolate, who sat in the dust, and was trampled upon by her: this great city, this glorious city, this rich city, this mighty powerful city, this queen of the earth (which knows not what belongs to Sion's misery, sorrow, poverty, and desolation), with antichrist her king and husband (who hath clothed himself with the garments of light, and appeared in the likeness of the king of Sion, and hath long been so acknowledged and worshipped), is to be judged by the spirit of life, which ariseth up out of the dust of Sion.

And though Babylon, the great whore (who in all her transformings hath still remained an enemy to the life), hath great power and great wisdom, and can shift very subtly to save herself by both; yet *strong is the Lord God who judgeth her, and he also is wise;* and she shall not escape his hand, but he will pursue her with his voices, with his thunderings, with his hail-stones, with his earthquakes, with his woes, with his plagues, with his cups of indignation, till he hath made her manifest, till he hath broken her in pieces, till he hath crumbled and laid her in the dust, till he hath brought her down to the very pit, where the feet of Sion shall trample upon her for ever. Sing, sing, Oh inhabitant of Sion! dost thou not behold the crown of pride going down apace? The decree is sealed against her; she cannot escape; yea, she is fallen, she is fallen; she is already taken in the snare; the eye of my life seeth it, and rejoiceth over her in the living power.

The plagues of God Almighty, from the fierceness of his indignation, are visiting her whole territories, and passing over all her land. Nothing can help her to avoid his stroke; no paint will serve, no cover will hide, no profession, no practice, no duties, no ordinances, no church, no ministry, can avail to conceal her; but that spirit is pursued by the spirit of the Lord, and found out everywhere, and plagues are prepared and pouring out upon her. Nay, though she leave all her forms, and pretend to wait and seek for the Lord; yet she is found out there also.

Now what is her judgment? Destruction and utter deso-

lation from the hand of the Lord; to be a hissing and reproach throughout all generations; to be brought down (by pourings-forth of the wrath and vengeance of the Almighty) into the pit, and there to drink the fulness of his wrath for ever. Sion shall be exalted; Sion shall drink the cup of life, the cup of blessing, the cup of love, the cup of salvation for ever: but Babylon the cup of fury, the cup of indignation for ever and ever. Sion shall sing; but Babylon shall howl: and all that saw any beauty, or took any pleasure in her, shall mourn over her. Alas, alas, for her! she who hath so many ages gone for the church, is now proved to be the whore; those who have been taken, in their several transformings, for the true ministers, made manifest to be the false prophets; their ordinances and duties, but thefts and imitations; things which they have stolen from what they read in the Scriptures, but never received from the hand of the spirit.

The wrath of God, the dreadful cup of his fury, and jealous indignation for the cause of Sion, is to go over her whole land, over her sea, and all the ships that trade therein, and all her merchants, with all her precious traffic and merchandize. All her doctrines which she hath stolen out of the scripture, all her disciplines, all her experiences, all her performances (even those which are most like the performances of the former saints); nay, though she may speak the very words of truth, yet as they come from her mouth, they shall be thrown by and judged, and be of no service or esteem in Sion. The preciousest of her ware shall be dross and dung in the land of life, where there shall be no sea, and no such kind of merchants, traffic, or trading for ever.

Her earth also shall be made desolate, and burnt up, with all that is found therein; all her settlements shall be shaken; all her fruit-trees shall be rooted up; all her fruit shall wither, rot, die, and perish. All her conversions of people to God, as she calls them, shall come to nothing: yea, and if she have yet any more dresses, or secret coverings, wherein she would appear like the church again, and bring forth again; yet she and her children shall immediately be

discovered, her flesh burnt with fire, and her children dashed against the stones. Every street in her city, every house and idol in every street, every room in every house, with every inhabitant, shall drink of the cup of astonishment, and stumble and fall, and rise no more. "Thou hast long triumphed over me, O mine enemy! because I have fallen, and have long sat in darkness; but rejoice no longer; for I shall rise again, and the Lord shall be a light unto me: but thou shalt rise no more, and thy light shall be put out for ever. Glory to the meek, suffering Lamb, even to him that sits upon the throne of life for ever."

Her air also shall be darkened. The Lord shall enlighten my darkness; but the light of Babylon shall be darkness for evermore. "The light of a candle shall be seen no more at all in thee." Many lights hath Babylon set up in the dark night; but the rising of the Sun of Righteousness shall extinguish them all for ever, and Babylon shall be shut up in utter darkness. Yea, all that have retained to Babylon, all that have walked by the light of any of her candles, that have cried up any of her false ware for orthodox, that have given up their names to her under any of her dresses or appearances, or that have received any of her marks, they shall partake of her shame, of her misery, and of her torment, from the hand of the Lord God. Yea, her throne also shall be visited, and the seat of antichrist in every heart shall feel the wrath.

Rise up from the dust, and shout forth with joy, O captive daughter of Sion, who hast long dwelt under oppression, in the midst of the daughter of Babylon. Behold! Babylon's king shall be no longer judge over Sion; but thy King shall be judge, and he shall judge the king of Babylon: and let all the powers and potsherds of the earth strive to their utmost; yet, saith the Lord, "have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion," and he shall rule in my people, and rule over Babylon.

Learn, therefore, O inhabitants of the earth, great and small, meekness; learn righteouness; learn the fear of the Lord; kiss the Son; harden not yourselves against him,

calling him a deceiver, a blasphemer, a seducer, a heretic (for what ye do to the least that appear in his life, ye do to him): but hearken to the word of his everlasting gospel, which saith, "FEAR GOD, AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME;" and ye cannot escape his hand by that fear which is taught by the precepts of men, or by traditional knowledge out of the Scriptures; nor while ye seek that honor which came out of the earth, and is of the earth, and to that which is earthly. Therefore let your hearts learn to know him, and your tongues to confess him, and your knees to bow to him; which if ye do, ye must forget all that knowledge, and those confessions and bowings, which ye have learned in Babylon; for though ye may have confessed some true things, yet (having learned this in Babylon) ye have confessed falsely; even as the Jews, who said, "the Lord liveth," yet swore falsely. Jer. v. 2.

Now consider, ye ministers of several sorts, and ye several sorts of professors: we may appear great enemies to you, because we witness against your ways, and tell you what the end of them will be; but are we enemies to you indeed, whose desire it is to save you from this great wrath, which hath already entered into the earth, and seized on some? Should we soothe you up, and not witness these things to you (which we infallibly know), how should we answer it to the Lord our God, or to your souls, when we shall appear before him? If we were in your condition, would we be content to be let go on, and to be overtaken with this great destruction? We cannot be silent. Ye must be silent; but we cannot. We know ye must be silent; for that which now speaks in you, hath been silenced in us, and is not to minister the things of God. But the spirit of the Lord must not be quenched in us, notwithstanding all our weakness; but the treasure must issue forth from the earthen vessel, for the relief of the poor in spirit, who alone receive the gospel. Therefore, though ye hate us, though ye persecute us, though ye speak all manner of evil against us, and use us ever so hardly; yet there is love rooted in our souls toward your souls, yea, and toward your persons also:

and having both felt the wrath, and tasted of the mercy, we cannot but warn you of the one, and invite you to the other. And oh! that ye might find a shelter under the shadow of his wings in the stormy season, when wrath shall be showered down without mercy!

And this we cannot but tell you, that the several ways of religion in the Christian world are but so many several coverings; and that that which is covered with them is the whorish spirit, which the spirit of the Lord is hunting; who will strip her, and make her naked, and she shall appear to have been the whore under them all. Now that which lieth beneath this spirit in you, which is despised and trampled upon as a thing of nought, which is burdened and daily slain by your multitudes of ordinances, professions, and religious practices; this is the heir of life; and by the raising up and living of this in you, may ye come to life, and no otherwise. And all religion without this, even the most inward, is but the deceit of the whore, who makes a great show of worship, and zeal toward Christ, his ordinances and ministry (as she calls them); but by all these, and under all these, holds the life in bondage, and strives by all means to slay the heir, that the inheritance might come to her son. But Cain, the sacrificer; Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman; Esau, the hunter abroad after venison; the Jew, full of profession, zeal, ordinances, and worship, shall not inherit: but slain Abel shall be raised to life: Isaac (who was born of the dry and barren womb) shall have the promise; plain Jacob, the blessing; the out-cast Gentile be sought out. Thus it shall be; can ye read it? Yet it is the desire of our souls that a remnant of you may be saved, and now is the gathering. Therefore seek humility, seek poverty of spirit, seek the suffering seed, the meek, innocent, harmless, dove-like nature, even the love which doeth no ill, nor thinks no ill; for this is the spirit which is to be gathered: but the high and lofty, the wise and knowing, the fat and strong, the rough and confident, in their wisdom, and in their duties, churches, ordinances, &c., (which they have gathered and stolen from the Scriptures, out of the life) are with all these to be re-

jected, and to be shut up in blindness and hardness of heart. "Seeing, they are to see, and not perceive; and hearing, to hear, and not understand; lest they should be converted, and healed." Yea, it is this spirit which is to fret under its pain and torment from the woes and plagues; but cannot repent, but passeth on with Babylon to ruin and destruction. Rev. xvi. 9, 10, 11. "Babylon is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. xviii. 2, 4.

This is the cry concerning Babylon just upon her fall. Her iniquity is full, her filth overflows, the pure seed is gathering out of her, and nothing but devils and foul spirits, and unclean, hateful birds, remain in her. And the call still is to the people of God, from one remove to another, from one part of Babylon to another, to travel on, and pass away still, till they come quite out of it all. To come out of one part of Babylonish worship, that is not enough; or to come out of some pieces of Babylonish knowledge and wisdom, will not answer the call; but ye must come out of it all. "Depart ye, depart ye; this is not your rest, for it is polluted." Stay not in any part of the unclean land, O child of the pure life! but be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, if thou wilt have the holy One to receive thee. Not only the several dresses and forms of the whore are polluted; but her spirit also, and all her inward fabric of religion, out of which thou must also come, if ever thou be joined to the pure life. Thy faith, thy hope, thy love, thy patience, thy joy, thy peace, thy justification, thy sanctification, thy mortification, thy ability to pray, to give thanks, to wait, &c., all must down, all must suffer loss, all must become dross and dung to thee, that thou mayst know the building of true life from and in the spirit. For the Lord will not own any of these, nor receive thee with any of these which the whore hath touched; but if thou wilt have the pure life, both within and without, thou must part with the corrupt life, both within and without. This is a faithful and true

testimony; but who can receive it? Will not both the houses of Israel be offended, and stumble at it? But if any of the people of God will abide still in Babylon, and not hearken to every call of the spirit of the Lord, to follow its guidance out of every part of her, *they shall receive* (from the impartial hand of the Lord) *of her plagues, and have torment and sorrow* proportionable to the glory and pleasure they have had with her. Therefore, if after one, two, three, or many removes out of some parts and practices of Babylon, the voice still follow, crying, "Come out of her, my people" (the spirit of antichrist is yet among you, the wine of fornication from the pure life is not yet purged out of you), do not stop your ears, thinking this belongs not to you, because ye have forsaken some paths which are antichristian; but hear and follow; for it is your life, and your way to rest and peace in the land of the living, and your sure preservation from anguish, perplexity, and misery in the hour of Babylon's judgment and sore distress.

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

Now there is one thing which lies as a great block in the way, to hinder this testimony from entering into the hearts of those to whom it is directed, or at least to weaken the spirit's demonstration of it to their consciences (for exceeding subtle is the whorish spirit to keep every one of her subjects from the sight or suspicion of her in themselves, and to darken every beam of light, whereby it pleaseth God to make any way for the discovery of her in them), which is this:

Object. But hath all our religion, for these many ages, been Babylonish, and whoredom from the life? All our churches, all our ordinances, all our duties, all our ministry, &c. We can never be drawn to believe this. We are sure we have felt lively touches from God many a time, and enjoyed sweet communion with him in them. God hath often met us there, and refreshed our spirits; which he would not have done, had they not been of himself.

Ans. There hath been a simplicity and sincerity of heart, stirring in some people towards God, in all ages: even among the heathen, under all their idols; and among the Jews, in the midst of their great apostasy: which simplicity is of God, and acceptable with him, notwithstanding all the load of filth that may hang round about it. Even in the midst of Egypt, or in the midst of Babylon, if Israel groans, the Lord hears, and may return sweet answers to Israel, even there. "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." The lowest breathing of true life towards God is the voice of his Son, and enters into his ear from the darkest part of Egypt or Babylon.

Now in this nation the simplicity hath more stirred than in other nations; the seed of God in this land hath been exceeding precious and dear to him. And at the beginning of these late troubles, the stirring of the simplicity from the pure seed was more vigorous and lively than it had been in many ages before; and accordingly the answers of God to it were more fresh and sweet; and there was a taste of him, and fellowship with him, and sweet hopes and refreshments to the soul. Though the way of praying, preaching, and worship, either public or private, was not right before him; yet he overlooked that which his soul hated (winking at the time of ignorance and antichristian darkness), and met with that which he loved. And if the simplicity had grown and thriven, communion with God, and life from him, would have increased, although the pure path of the sanctuary had not yet been made manifest.

But this was it destroyed all; another thing got up under a cover, and the simplicity sunk; and so the life withdrew, and God hath grown strange to his people. He missed that which he loved, and came to visit; he found that thrust upon him for his, which his soul cannot own or unite with; and so he became but "as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry for a night." Jer. xiv. 8. Enter into your hearts, O ye backsliding children! is it not thus? You who had sweet tastes of God, is he not become a stranger to you? You that had sweet, fresh, lively breathings after God, are

you not set down in a form, or under some pleasing notions, and have got a covering, but lost the simplicity of your life, and the sweet tastes of God, and refreshments from him? Thus it hath been in all reformations. There was commonly a pure, single, naked beginning; but an evil thing soon got dominion over it, slaying the pure, living stirring by the form which it raised up, under a pretence of preserving the life thereby, and of serving God more uniformly and acceptably therein. Ah! the precious seed that was sown at the beginning of these troubles! What is become of it? How is every one turned aside from the pure life, into some idol or other of his own heart! some into one way of worship, and some into another; some into one notion, and some into another; and all joining together to keep the seed in bondage, endeavoring either to bring it back again to Egypt (to make it serve there), or to destroy and bury it in the wilderness. But the Lord hath visited this poor, desolate seed, and hath been gathering it from all quarters; from amidst all empty forms on the one hand, and all vain, high notions on the other hand; and he will preserve it, overturning all his new enemies, as well as his old.

This then is the sum of the answer.

1. No way, or particular act of worship, under the New Testament, is acceptable to God, without his spirit.

2. All invented or imitated ways or acts of worship, to the performing whereof the moving, presence, and power of his spirit are not necessary, but men can perform them without it, are Babylonish, and whoredom from that spirit to which the true Christian is joined, and in which all that he doeth is performed.

3. Under this antichristianism, under this whoredom, even in the land of Babylon, where the true Israel is captive, a true simplicity towards God may sometimes be stirring.

4. When this at any time is stirring towards the Lord, the Lord pities it, the Lord loves it, the Lord accepts it. When this calls, the Lord hears, and waits that he may be gracious, and return answers of grace to it.

5. Though the Lord accept of this in the midst of Baby-

lon, and in the midst of the whorish ways of worship that have been learned there; yet this doth not make Babylon, or her ways of worship, acceptable; nor are they to be made use of (nor cannot) by any that fears God, to justify them.

6. Where they are so made use of, and the Babylonish ways and forms of worship cried up (because of God's visitations and tender mercy to his seed under them), God is provoked, his presence withdrawn, life lost, and wrath prepared against those forms and ways of worship, which will reach to the very bowels of those who are found there.

And let this word come home to your hearts, O ye that ever knew what belonged to sweet communion with God! if God was so tender to you in Babylon, when he stirred up in you a pure simplicity and zeal there, what would he have been to you, if ye had come out of Babylon? Ah! ye have lost the substance for a shadow; and that not a right shadow either, but a shadow of your own forming! and now ye are angry with them, who will not also leave the substance to cry up your shadow. Ah! enter into your secret chambers, and let shame cover your faces; ye who would propagate that apostasy from the Lord, which your own hearts have too far entered into, and are so deeply involved in. Oh, that the eye were opened in you which can see it! Do not your hearts a little feel it? Oh, mourn after the Lord, and mourn after the loss of that which once (in some measure in you) was true to the Lord. Oh, that the lost sheep might be sought out, and that which hath been scattered (in the day of your loftiness, and seeking dominion and great things) might be gathered again to the Lord! for great is the wrath and severity that is towards you, and he is become exceeding jealous for his seed's sake; and judgment must begin with you, who cry out against antichrist in one gross, fleshly appearance, and yet are serving him yourselves, some of you in other forms, some in spirit.

This is a standing truth; whatever is not of the spirit of God in religion and worship, is of the spirit of antichrist. Whatever the spirit of man hath invented or imitated, is not the thing itself, is not the true worship; for the true worship is

only and continually in the spirit, and never out of the spirit. The true praying is in the spirit; the true singing, in the spirit; the true preaching, in the spirit: whatsoever is out of it, is of antichrist in man. Now therefore give up all your religion, your knowledge, your worship, your practices, which are out of the spirit; and return unto the Lord, and wait for his raising of that seed in you, which once began to spring, but is now slain, and lies in death and captivity under all these; and the earthly part (wherein all this religion and these practices stand) covers its blood, so as ye cannot see how ye have slain, and daily do slay, the just One.

Oh the blood, the blood, the innocent blood, that daily cries to the Lord against you! How can the Lord accept any of your services, while your hands are full of blood! while the pure simplicity is slain, the love grown cold, the life lost, and the whorish way and path (wherein and whereby it was lost) cried up for the way of God. Shall not the Lord visit for these things? Shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Yea, his wrath is kindled, the fierceness of his wrath is kindled against the professors of this age, and woe is from the Lord towards them. Woe to the Protestant congregations, woe to the select churches, woe to their pastors, who have helped them to wander from the life to dead idols, which cannot profit: woe to them who are exalted in notions and high knowledge. Ye have judged and condemned the Papists, and the Lord hath found the same spirit of idolatry in you! but turn from your idols, return to your simplicity, put away your adulteries from between your breasts, and return to your first love, and the Lord will receive you, though ye have wandered after many lovers, and have been inflamed with the love of idols under every green tree: but in these your church-ways and worships the soul of the Lord abhors you, and all your former zeal and simplicity are blotted out and forgotten; and in your present adultery and idolatry shall ye die, unless ye hear the voice of the Lord recalling you, and turn at his reproof.

Now in tender bowels to help you a little, consider that which follows:

The same spirit that stealeth away the true simplicity, raiseth up and stealeth in a false image thereof; which there is no perceiving at present, unless the soul lie very low, and be kept open and clear in the pure light.

And as in the true simplicity, the true light, the true knowledge, the true faith, the true hope, the true love, the true meekness, the true zeal, the true poverty and humility, &c., spring up and are nourished; so in the false image of simplicity (which the devil secretly conveys in, when he steals away the true) there is a likeness of all these springing up and growing.

And here is the beginning of Babylon in the heart; here are the inward riches and treasures thereof. What can Sion pretend to, which Babylon hath not in the resemblance? Is there simplicity of heart in Sion? And is there not simplicity of heart among the inhabitants of Babylon? Yea, a false image. Is there light in Sion? And is there not also light in Babylon? Yea, there is the light of the sun, and the light of the moon, and the light of the stars which fell from heaven, and the light of many candles shining in Babylon. Is there a true knowledge, in Sion? There is knowledge, falsely so called, in Babylon. A false knowledge of the cross of Christ; a false knowledge of his death; a false knowledge of his blood, without feeling the living virtue thereof, which truly washeth away the sin. So for faith, hope, love, meekness, zeal, humility, &c., there are false images of all these in Babylon, and of whatever else is wrought in truth in the inhabitants of Sion.

Now when the truth is lost, and the false image crept in (both which are done at unawares, while the husbandman is asleep, and so he perceives it not, but thinks in his very heart that it is still the seed of truth that is growing up in him), then begins the mystery of fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, and all manner of spiritual wickedness and deceit to work in the heart. Thy believing, thy hoping, thy love, thy zeal, thy praying, thy waiting, &c., all here is abomination;

it is from a false root; it is of a false kind; it is not of the true seed: the enemy hath stolen away that, whilst thou wast negligent and slumbering; and all this ariseth in thee from the seed which he did sow instead thereof, and is the fruit of the land of Babylon.

And having thus committed inward whoredom in thine own heart, then thou seekest and settest up outward ways of whoredom also. Having first set up an inward image of the inward life of the saints, thou then seekest and settest up another image of their outward worship; an image of a church, an image of a ministry, an image of ordinances, an image of praying, an image of singing, an image of preaching, an image of baptism, an image of the saints' communion. And thus thou art defiled within and without: and art mad with envy and rage that thou canst not bewitch the inhabitants of Sion (who are kept pure from all these defilements, and reserved as witnesses against thee) into thy bed of whoredoms. And thus, while thou thinkest thou art the chief worshipper, thou art all over polluted; "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;" there is no cleanness, no soundness, within or without, but "wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores," which "have not been closed, neither bound up, nor mollified with oil:" but the hurt of the daughter of my people hath been healed deceitfully, by physicians of no value, who have not the oil. Isa. i. 5, 6. and Ezek. xiii. 10.

This is generally the state of professors of this day; but they cannot see it: for they have put out the eye of the simplicity (wherewith alone God will suffer the things of life to be seen), and God hath blinded the eye of their wisdom, that they shall not see, nor be converted and healed that way. So that exceeding miserable is their estate: they will not see God's way, and God will not let them see their way. So that though there be "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little; yet it is that they might stumble, and fall, and be snared, and broken, and taken." For as discoveries of truth grow more clear and manifest; so they grow more hardened against it. And as they, on

the one hand, increase in walking contrary to God; so God, on the other hand, proceeds in walking contrary to them; delighting more and more to stumble the wise, disputing part, which would so fain know, but must be made blind, that the eye of the babe may be opened, which sees that in the childish simplicity, which the other eye can never reach in the most manly wisdom.

Therefore put away all your images and likenesses of truth: put away your false faith (which can never overcome the worldly nature and spirit in you), and your false hope (which can never purify your hearts), and your feigned humility, and self-willed fasts (which can never bring down the lofty, exalted nature in you), and your false love (wherewith ye can never love the brethren in the truth, but only the brethren in your notions, or some such other likeness of the truth), and your false zeal, meekness, holiness, &c., (all which spring and grow up from the wrong seed, in a seeming simplicity): and all your praying, reading, preaching, &c., which ye have taken up and do practise in your own wills, which should be crucified; and wherewith no service, worship, or performance, can be pleasing to God; and wait for the raising of the true seed of life, in the true simplicity, whereby ye may serve God acceptably here, and be saved hereafter. And be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong; for the consumption is determined against you by that Spirit of life, whose breath will waste you. *All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field! Surely this people is grass, and their zeal and profession of God, like the fading flower.*

SOME PLAIN QUERIES,

Drawn out of the Book of the REVELATIONS, for all Sorts of Professors of this Age to answer between GOD and their own Souls; that they may see whether they have received that Light from him, which his Spirit judged necessary to give forth, to keep People chaste to him, and to preserve them from the several painted Beds of Antichrist's Fornications and Whoredoms from the Life.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Rev. i. 3.

The time of deceit was then at hand for antichrist (with his false church, and false prophets) to get up, which were to last till "the hour of judgment." Rev. xiv. 7, 8. Hast thou read? hast thou heard? hast thou kept the things written in this book? Then happy art thou! But hast thou not read in the Spirit? hast thou not heard the true sound of these things from the Spirit of life? hast thou not kept the things written therein? Then thou hast been deceived with the mystery of iniquity, and must smart with the whore in the hour of her judgment.

The QUERIES are these which follow.

FIRST. WHAT woman was that which was clothed with the sun, and had the moon under her feet, &c. Rev. xii. 1. Whether it was the true church or no?

SECOND. What that wilderness was whereinto she fled; where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there 1260 days? ver. 6.

THIRD. How long those 1260 days did last? and whether they be yet expired? and whether the true church is anywhere else to be found all the time of the 1260 days, but in that place in the wilderness?

FOURTH. What are all the churches, the ministry, the ordinances, that appear out of the wilderness all this while, while the true church is there?

FIFTH. What was that beast which came out of the sea; to which the dragon gave his power, his seat, and great authority? which all the world worshipped? Rev. xiii. ver. 1, to 5.

SIXTH. What is that sea, and those ships, wherein and wherewith the merchants of the earth traded with Babylon, and were made rich by their traffic? what were those merchants? what their merchandize? and what kind of riches was this? Rev. xviii. ver. 15, to 20.

SEVENTH. What was that name of God, and that tabernacle, and those inhabitants of heaven, which were blasphemed by the beast that arose out of the sea, all the time of the forty-two months? Rev. xiii. ver. 5, 6.

EIGHTH. What is the Lamb's book of life? and where is it? and how are the names of any so written in it, as to preserve them from the worship of the beast? Rev. xiii. 8.

NINTH. What is that beast that came up out of the earth, with the horns of a lamb (as if it came up in the Lamb's power), which doeth great wonders, and justifieth his sacrifice, by making fire come down from heaven in the sight of men; who both caused men to make an image to the first beast, and also putteth life into the image which men make? Rev. xiii. ver. 11, &c. So that here is not a mere dead image, but there is life in the beast's knowledge, ordinances, and worship: yet with God all this is dead, for it is not the true life.

TENTH. What is the beast's mark, his name, his number? Rev. xiii. 17. For if I do not infallibly know this, I may have received his mark; I may help to make up his name; I may be of his number, and be, unknown to myself, a worshipper of him and his image, and so be liable to partake of the torment of the fire and brimstone threatened to such. xix. 9, 10.

ELEVENTH. What is that song, which none could learn but the 144000, which were not defiled with women, but re-

mained virgins? Rev. xiv. 3.

TWELFTH. What was that other woman, which took and kept the place of the former woman, after she had fled into the wilderness, and enlarged her territories in nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples? Rev. xvi. 4, and ver. 15.

THIRTEENTH. What were the purple and scarlet colours, and the gold and precious stones she was decked with? ver. 4.

FOURTEENTH. What was the golden cup she had in her hand, which was full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornications; in the midst of all her glorious appearance of zeal, devotion, humility, and holiness? ver. 4.

FIFTEENTH. What kind of drunkenness was it, wherewith the kings and inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of this cup? Rev. xvii. 2.

SIXTEENTH. How may those who have hated the whore, and made her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burned her with fire, yet after all this, give their kingdom again to the beast? Rev. xvii. ver. 16, 17. How may this be done? and how often may it be done?

These are plain, simple queries, not to entangle men's minds, or set their brains on work (for that way shall they never be able to resolve them) but to awaken the simplicity in them, which will readily let them see what the Lord hath revealed to them herein, and in which they are to wait for the knowledge hereof, that they may escape or come out of the snare. And in the mean time not to boast, as Israel of old did (when the prophets from the mouth of the Lord accused them) that they had not "polluted themselves," they had not "gone after Baalim" (Jer. xxii. xxiii. and ver. 35.); but wait O backsliding Christian! and thou shalt "see the way in the valley." And though thou hast often traversed thy ground to change thy path, gadding from one form to another, from one notion to another; yet all this hath been out of the life, out of the pure power, and still in the whoredom. Open the weak, sick eye in the weak heart (*for how weak is thy heart, while thou hast done all this!*), and let the languishing simplicity be my witness: for (under all thy wisdom, thy zeal, thy knowledge, thy worship) that faints, that fails,

that is not what it was in the beginning. Though thou art grown much higher, wiser, and greater otherwise, yet there thou hast lost: and happy wilt thou be, if all thy gains ever since may become loss to thee for the recovering of this.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS,

Helping out of the Suburbs or Out-skirts of Babylon, that her inward building may be the better come at, and lie more open to the axe and hammer, which are to batter it down, and to cut it for the Fire.

First, consider what it was the church fled out of, when she fled into the wilderness. Was it not out of that church-state or building, which the Spirit of God had raised up for her here in the world, to which her ordinances, and way of church-worship belonged? Was it not here that the dragon assaulted her, and from whence she fled into a desolate place and state?

Secondly, What spirit entered into these, when she fled out of them? Were not these the conqueror's spoils? Did not antichrist get possession of the form? Did not the whore get the spouse's attire? Did not the wolves gather up the sheep's clothing, and clothe themselves therewith? Was not the outward court (what is the outward court under the gospel, but the visible church-state, with the visible ordinances thereof?) given to the Gentiles, who trod under foot the holy city, all the while they were worshipping in the outward court? Rev. xi. 2.

Thirdly, What spirit is it directs men to these, since the true church hath been fled out of them? And to what intent? Is it not that spirit which would keep men from the life, that they might not be born of the barren womb in the wilderness, but be born of some of the fruitful wombs of the visible churches; while the true church is invisible, and hath no visible place in the earth, but remains in that place in the wilderness which God prepared for her, and where

she receiveth her food all the forty-two months? Rev. xii. ver. 6, 14.

I have smarted deeply for these things, and have been taught by the briars and thorns of the wilderness, whereby my ears came to be opened, to hear the sound of the everlasting gospel, to which they were before through ignorance stopped. For I also did believe and expect great things in a church-state and way of worship; and in simplicity of heart did I enter into it, and walk in it, and was not without knowledge, warmth, and experiences there. But all this the Lord broke down by a strong hand, in one moment; and hath taught me since to throw away all my gains here, and elsewhere, and to count them but dross and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord. And having tasted, having seen, having felt, having handled, I cannot but commend the life; and dissuade all men from all knowledge, all worship, all religion, all ways, and practices (though ever so taking, pleasant, and promising), out of the life. And this is to know Christ; namely, to know the life: and this is to obey Christ, to obey the life: and this is the kingdom of Christ which is to come, to have the life reign in power and great glory. But the knowing or believing of a history concerning Christ, this is not the knowledge or the faith: antichrist all along the apostasy, in all his various forms and dresses, hath known and believed thus: and this kind of knowledge must pass away, further than it can find a place and service in the life. Be not angry at my testimony; it flows from pure love, and comes forth in great good-will to your souls.

Yea, if it be possible that I might be a little serviceable to you (for my soul travails for the redemption of professors from the witchery of the whorish spirit, even of such as are ready to revile that which alone can redeem them), in the meekness and coolness of your spirits, out of the fiery, false zeal, consider yet a little further these few things following:

1. The state of the gospel is an invisible state, a state consisting of invisible things (as the law was a visible state, or a state consisting of visible things); the light invisible,

the life invisible. the power invisible; that which converts invisible, that which is converted invisible, that which it is converted to invisible, and the whole course of spiritual life lies invisible.

2. This invisible state hath a visible way of appearance to the world, by garments which it wears, by motions and exercises which the life chooseth for it to appear in.

3. These garments are subject to corrupt, and to be worn by that which is corruptible, and corrupted. That which hath not the life may put on the garment; and that which hath lost the life may still keep the garment.

4. The preservation of the life lies not in the garment, or in the observation of any thing wherein the life did once appear; but the preservation of the garment lies in the life. And the life may change its garment at its pleasure, and may refuse to wear those any more which the whore hath worn, but as the life again leadeth.

5. When the life is at any time lost, the only way of recovery is by retiring to the invisible, and keeping there, and growing up there; and not coming forth in the visible further than the life leads, nor staying there any longer than the life stays.

Now this is the mistake of persons generally; they look for the finding the invisible life in visibles. They run to corrupted ordinances and ways of devotion, and think to find God there: but do not wait to feel him in their hearts, and to be led by him into what he pleaseth; and to stay no where any longer than while he stayeth there, but to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth.

Some others mistake in running to that, and waiting there where they once felt life, but do not know the way to wait on the life itself: and so they are running to an image, waiting at an image, worshipping of an image, and the living God will not meet them there. But throw away your images; let Ephraim, the dear child, say to his idols, Get you hence; thrust away your adulteries which provoke the eye of God's jealousy, receive the forerunner (the severe purifier) into your bosoms, and let the fire of his jealousy

cleanse your hearts, and the pure will soon come after, and lodge again between your breasts. Can ye hear this sound? That which is born of the same wisdom, cannot but hear it; but the other birth must have its ear stopped.

Now hearken to this advice. When the invisible life is felt and known, do not disdain to follow it into whatever visible thing it leads. Let not thy wisdom be judge what the life will lead into, or what the life is to be followed in; but let the life itself be judge: and let the child, which is born of the life, follow it singly, without murmuring, without disputing. The life hath foolish ways (to the eye of thy wisdom) of breaking the wisdom in thee, which is contrary to it, which thy wisdom will be reasoning and disputing against; and if that wisdom be hearkened to, the life is overturned in its course, and the head of the serpent remains found in thee, which the foolish and weak things (which the wisdom of God chooseth to cross and disturb it by) would help to break and crush.

AN EXHORTATION TO THE PRESENT POWERS.

Babylon the great, the mystery of iniquity, which hath deceived and held captive the whole Christian world for these many generations, under forms and appearances of godliness and devotion, is at length come into remembrance before God, who is arisen to judge her, and overturn her seat. The army hath been preparing, and many soldiers have been drawn forth; the trumpet hath sounded, the battle is begun, and blood hath been shed on both sides; the blood of the creature on the one side, the blood of the whorish spirit on the other side.

The whore (with the power of the beast on which she rides, and by whose strength and assistance she makes war with the Lamb) is mighty and dreadful: and it hath long

been said, "Who is able to make war with the beast?" (whose strength is hers). But the Lord God (who hath risen out of his holy habitation to judge, and hath begun to judge her) is more mighty; by whose arm and strength she shall fall, and the beast shall not be able to carry her up and down any longer; nay, nor to uphold her in her seat of government over the consciences of men.

Be wise now, therefore, and consider the present state of things; and if ye find not hearts to help the Lord against the mighty, yet take heed of helping the mighty against the Lord. The vessels wherein the life arises and appears, are poor and very contemptible, and ye may easily trample upon them: but the life which riseth up in them is very precious, and too strong for the powers of earth or of hell. The Lord did not appear formerly among you, or of late begin to raise you up again, that ye should become enemies to him, or aiders of his enemies against him; but that ye might let his seed go forth to worship him in the wilderness (for in this dark land of Egypt they cannot). Therefore break the yokes, and take off the burdens, and let there be no new snares laid; but leave the conscience (where the Lord chooseth to appear, and which he delights to draw out of the world to himself) free to the Lord.

The Lord hath kindled, and is kindling, the fire with which he is burning, and will burn, the flesh of the whore. Come not near to help her, lest ye feel the flames. Stand afar off and see her burning, and at most pity her, but help her not.

We fight not against the flesh and blood of creatures, but against that evil spirit which captivates and makes them miserable: nor do we fight with carnal weapons, but with such weapons as are able to reach that spirit. Now if ye interpose with your carnal weapons, and smite the vessel which the Lord is pleased to make use of in this warfare, his hand will be upon you: yea, if ye endeavor to bear off the stroke from the whore, it will light upon yourselves, and the Lord's hand (and his strokes in this day of his jealousy and vengeance) is very heavy.

Do what ye can, ye shall not be able to hinder the Lord's victory (who will overcome, even by this very people, whom the wise of all sorts despise). All that ye can do in taking part with the enemy, is but to bring wounds and judgments upon yourselves, and to shorten the days of your government. But the work of the Lord will go on and prosper; and this painted harlot (which pretends to be the spouse of Christ, and has decked herself so pleasingly with her stolen knowledge of scriptures, and lays claim to his ministry and ordinances) shall be stripped naked, and her shame seen, and every child in the life shall be able to point at her; and the song of triumph over the dragon, the beast, the false churches, and all the false prophets (who are not made, nor prophesy not, by the anointing) shall be sung in righteousness, even to the Lamb, who daily getteth, and will get, perfect victory; for to him it is given over all his enemies.

POSTSCRIPT.

The redemption of the soul is by the Spirit of the Lord; which he that would enjoy from it, must know its appearance and operation in himself, and not quench or limit it, but universally be subject to its guidance and leadings. All man's inward misery arises from man's inward rebellion, which is as the sin of witchcraft (springing from the spirit of witchcraft). His recovery and happiness are in the faith and obedience to the pure power, movings, and operations of the Spirit in him.

The Lord God, who made mankind, who is the Lord of all, he is redeeming a people to himself by his Spirit. And this Spirit will not be limited by the powers of the earth, but will break nations in pieces, and trample upon princes as mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay, till it hath made its way through them.

Oh! open the eye, the inward eye, which can discern the seasons. It is not now the time for antichrist to prevail, or for proud flesh to rise up in its heady will, to stop the out-

goings of its Maker. This season is past; and the season of the prevailing of the life and power of the Sun of Righteousness is now come.

Therefore lift up your heads, O ye weak and faint of the flock! for iniquity and oppresssion must fall both within and without; and the tender God of everlasting love will turn back the captivity of his people, and of his creatures. Be not therefore affrighted at the inward power of sin in the heart, nor at the outward oppressing powers of the earth; for the Redeemer's strength is above all, and he is stretching forth his mighty arm to save: in the true and living faith of the elect it is felt.

And O ye potsherds of the earth! strive not with your Maker, limit him not, for he will assuredly break through you. Think not to subject him to your laws; but learn his law, come under his yoke, and be bound by him, that ye may taste of his liberty. Wash your lips, and kiss the Son, and be not angry at his various appearances so contrary to your wisdom; but fear his dreadful name, and his threshing instrument which hath teeth; and seek an hiding-place under the shadow of his wings, against the sharp season of the breaking-forth of his wrath, and jealous indignation for the cause of Sion, which hasteneth apace.

He hath long let the spirit of Babylon have its liberty, and his hath been silent: now is the time for his Spirit to speak, and for Babylon's to be silent. Will ye still force him to silence, and open Babylon's mouth? Will ye not suffer him to speak, but according to the laws and orders of Babylon? Must that counterfeit queen still sit on the throne among you, and the true princess be made her servant? Oh let it not be grievous to you, to see the Spirit of the Lord arise, and make Babylon appear Babylon! Her wisdom, her knowledge, her unity, her uniformity, her order, her comeliness, her beauty, are but folly, confusion, disorder, and deformity before the Lord. Happy is the eye that sees it, and the foot that turns from her.

Therefore awake, arise, and stand up from the dead. Come out of the thick, dark land, where the pure God of

life is not to be found: "Come out of Babylon, and touch not the unclean," that the pure life may receive you into unity with itself: but the spirit that is unpurged from its Babylonish worships and practices, the Lord will not suffer to come near him. Therefore search what is Babylon, and of Babylon, in all your ways and worships; and wait on the Spirit of the Lord to be redeemed out of it, and separated from it, or ye must remain separated from the Lord, and not partake of his life and virtue, from which that city, with all her inhabitants, is shut out for ever.

The Lord hath had a sore controversy with this nation (with her rulers, her teachers, and people) for his seed's sake, which he hath been begetting to himself, and calling forth to worship him (according to the pure law of his Spirit of life), out of the ways, worships, and heathenish customs of the earthly spirit.

Israel is his first-born, whom he will not have any longer kept in bondage. They are his own, of his own begetting and forming, of his own nourishing and bringing up; the plants of his own right hand, whom he watereth with the dews of heaven, and with the showers of his everlasting mercy and loving-kindness; whom he hath gathered by the arm of his power, and whom he leadeth and defendeth by his cloud, and pillar of fire; over whom he is tender as of the apple of his eye. They are his anointed ones, whom he will not have touched, but rebuketh kings and parliaments, armies and councils, for their sakes; saying, "Touch not mine anointed; and do my prophets no harm."

Have ye not seen, how no strength nor counsel hath been able to prevail against them? They have had no fence, but the arm which hath gathered them. What plottings and contrivings have there been against them! How are they, as sheep appointed for the slaughter, destined to be devoured, crushed, and trodden under foot; what divinations and enchantments have been used against them, even to blot out their name and remembrance from the earth!

But why do ye strive and contend thus with the God of Jacob? Can ye prosper? He that made the earth, will not

ye let him have room therein for his people? Must they be subject to your wills? Must they bow to your image? Shall not the God of the spirits of all flesh have the command of the spirits of his own people? Can ye stop the Spirit of God from breathing upon them? Or will ye fall foul upon them, if they be obedient to the breathings and movings of his Spirit? May it not suffice that they are innocent and harmless among you in their conversations and practices, but will ye still lord it over their consciences? Will ye put the Lord to it, to the very last, to try it out with you, whether he can defend his people, and make way for their liberty?

Well! if peace be taken from you; if your rulers, laws, and governments be broken in pieces; if his hand be stretched forth against you; if he curse your very blessings, whom can ye blame? Why do you provoke him against your own souls? Are ye stronger than he? If ye be stonger and wiser, ye may prevail: but if he be stronger, and will put forth his arm, his people shall be saved, and find a shelter in him, in the midst of all that wrath which is pouring down upon you. Your peace hath been lengthened out for their sakes. "If it had not been for their sakes," (for the remnant which the Lord hath had to gather) "ye had, ere this, been as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah." The land is full of filthiness, which the Lord's soul loathes; and instead of drawing forth the sword against it, ye draw it forth against his witnesses. There is liberty enough for sin and vanity, for excess and riotousness, for images and idols: but to worship God in spirit, to obey his pure movings; this kindles your rage, and these are the people who are a burthen to you. Ah! how fain would ye ease you of this people! (Sion is indeed a burthensome stone, and will fall heavy on all that meddle with her). But the Lord will ease himself of the adversaries of his life and Spirit, and he will bring forth his righteousness which he hath prepared, and set it up in the earth, and none shall be able to stop him. Therefore gather yourselves together in battle; associate yourselves, that ye may be broken in pieces: take counsel together, it

shall come to nought; speak the word, it shall not stand: but the Lord's counsel shall stand, and he will fulfil all his pleasure, and will delight himself in his people, and raise them up by the fall of their enemies: and then ye shall see against whom ye have plotted and contended, and what ye have helped to bring about by all your secret plots and designs. "If the Lord had not been on our side, now may Israel say;" if the Lord had not been on our side, what had become of his poor people! Ah, poor worm Jacob! how often would the foot of pride have trampled thee down again and again, had not the everlasting arm been stretched out for thee! but fear not, worm Jacob, nor be solicitous for thy preservation, but trust that arm which delighteth to preserve thee.

Ah foolish people and unwise! who strive against your own mercy; who see not on what hinge all your mercies hang, but make it your work to break down the wall that defends you!

Jerusalem is the city of the great King, which is coming down from heaven: and Israel is his people; and both must have a place in the earth. The Lord hath determined it, and who can withstand it? What prejudice can Jerusalem, or the inhabitants thereof, bring unto you? They are enemies, indeed, to this earthly state of things, and would have all brought into subjection to the life and power of their king, and all that stands in opposition to God brought down, and made pliable to his spirit; and this the unyoked earthly spirit cannot bear. But this is the interest of your souls, and the way to unity with that life which is their happiness, peace, and rest for ever. For if ye could pass through the fire, and bear the burning up of your dross, ye also might become vessels for the finer, and might dwell with them in their everlasting habitation.

The saints formerly had an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom, and came unto Mount Sion, which cannot be removed; and to Jerusalem, the city of the living God, Heb. xii. 22. where the blood of sprinkling, the peace that passeth understanding, the everlasting righte-

ousness, and the joy unspeakable and full of glory, were witnessed in the renewed spirit, which receiveth the kingdom which cannot be shaken, and entereth into the everlasting rest.

And it is again revealed, and the witnesses shall ascend into heaven in the sight of their enemies; even into the new heaven and the new earth, where righteousness dwells; and the old heaven and the old earth (with all their inhabitants) shall be burnt up: and then it shall be seen that righteousness becomes, and belongs to, the house of God for ever. And his city shall be a quiet habitation, free from all the noise and hurry of Babylon; where the pure river of life runs clear, free from all the mud and mixtures of Babylon; and the Lord God of infinite fulness will not disdain communion with his creatures, but will tabernacle among them, dwell with them, sup with them, walk in them, and take them into his holy habitation, and they shall dwell with him, sup with him, and walk in him.

But who shall abide in his tabernacle? who shall dwell in his holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, &c., he who contemns the vile person (how great and high soever), but honoreth them that fear the Lord, be they otherwise what they will. This man shall dwell on high, above the reach of all low, creeping, dark spirits, even in that holy habitation of life and power, which nothing can touch or annoy.

I shall now conclude with a few words concerning the present estate of this poor, distracted nation.

This nation hath long lain wounded and sick: she hath had many physicians (on whom she hath spent much) who have promised her fair, but have not effected her cure. Of late her wound hath been much enlarged; yea, she is become sick at her very heart, and in great danger. Many are spending their judgment upon her; some thinking a king would help all, some a parliament, and some hoping for good from the army; but every eye sees her case to be very desperate. Ah England, England! Thou strivest with thy Maker, and he overturns thy strength and coun-

cils. The life and wisdom which thou despisest, is that which alone can heal thee. Thou strivest to keep off the strokes from the enemies of God, and smitest his dear ones; how can he spare thee? Hand still joins in hand to keep the Lord's stroke from reaching Babylon, which he hath directed at her heart, and will not miss her, but will pierce through everything that stands in his way. Though the cry hath long been, *Hurt not the tender conscience;* it is that on which God works, and wherein he chooseth to appear, and with which he is pleased, and pities. Many promises have been, touching liberty of conscience; yet still the meek of the earth, the innocent lambs of Christ (those that are faithful to the light of God in their consciences) are persecuted and suffer. What canst thou plead, O England! why the Lord should not break thee all in pieces, and save his people himself, by and in the midst of thy ruins? The Lord will have the victory over thee in this particular, about which he hath so long striven with thee. It would be better and easier for thee to yield unto, than be forced by, his hand. Therefore, at length hear his voice, which hath so often and so loudly cried unto thee, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."

THE

JEW OUTWARD:

BEING A GLASS FOR THE

ROFESSORS OF THIS AGE.

WHEREIN,

IF THEY READ WITH MEEKNESS, AND IN THE TRUE LIGHT, SUCH OF THEM AS HAVE NOT OVERSLIPPED THE DAY OF THEIR VISITATION, MAY SEE THEIR OWN SPIRITS, TO THEIR OWN EVERLASTING ADVANTAGE AND COMFORT, BY LEARNING SUBJECTION TO THAT WHICH HATH POWER IN IT TO DESTROY THE EVIL SPIRIT IN THEM.

CONTAINING

Some EXCEPTIONS and ARGUMENTS of the JEWS gainst CHRIST'S APPEARANCE in that Body of Flesh their Days; which the present PROFESSORS may view and compare with their Exceptions and Arguments against his Appearance in Spirit in this Age; that they may see and consider which of them are the more weighty.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON, THE YOUNGER.

PREFACE.

THE Lord God of infinite goodness, hath ever dearly loved mankind, yet could never so appear to them since the transgression, as to be owned by them, till the veil was taken from before their hearts. Israel in Egypt hearkened not to Moses, because of their anguish and bondage. When they were led out, they were ever and anon murmuring, and picking quarrels against him. Samuel they rejected (as the Lord lays to their charge); though they might excuse themselves, and say they had just exceptions against his sons. Elijah, that mighty man of God, the great restorer of Israel, and pleader against Baal by fire, his life was sought for. And though there be not a particular record of their usage of the prophets about those days, yet in general he complains that they were all slain but himself. 1 Kings xix. 10. Micaiah was smitten on the cheek, and jeered by the false prophet who smote him, and said, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?" And he was commanded to be put in prison, and fed with bread of affliction and water of affliction. Jeremiah was put into the dungeon, even to the danger of his life: and by those few that were left, that seemed singly to inquire by him concerning the will of the Lord (Jer. xlii. 2, 3.), disdainfully rejected. chap. xliii. 2. Why should I spend time in particular instances? What prophet can I except? for though all their bad dealings with them are not related in scripture; yet Christ testifies that they did deal badly with them all; some of them they stoned, some of them they scourged in their synagogues, some of them they killed and crucified, and others they persecuted from city to city. "Yea," saith Stephen, "which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the just One." Ye make it such a strange thing, that if Christ had been a prophet, ye should not own him; why which of the prophets was owned? Ye have still

some exception or other against us, that we are not the prophets of God; and against our message, that it is not the mind of God. Ye take arguments from one prophet's words to oppose another prophet with; and from one prophet's manner of coming, to oppose another phophet's manner of coming. If John come neither eating nor drinking, ye reject him for his austereness: if Christ come both eating and drinking, ye reject him for his liberty and freedom in the life. Now what is the reason of this? Christ himself gives the reason. Mat. xi. 19. "Wisdom is justified of her children." Ye are not the children of wisdom, ye are not begotten of the life, of the Spirit of the prophets, and so cannot justify that Spirit. Ye have got the letter of the prophets, ye are born of that; but ye are not born of the life, ye are not born of the wisdom. And so whoever comes forth in the same birth from the letter with you, him ye can own; but if any prophet come forth with that same Spirit, him ye cannot own. He that is born after the flesh, cannot but persecute him that is born after the Spirit. Jerusalem was all along the persecutor of the prophets, from the beginning to the end.

And is this nothing to you, O ye professors of this age! Search and see who have been the persecutors among you, but they who have had the name of the church and her prophets. Who have slain the witnesses? The church of Rome hath slain the witnesses against her, and the Protestants have slain the witnesses against them. About the beginning of these troubles, if a man were never so truly zealous, yet if he could not conform to the common prayer book and ceremonies, how was he persecuted! A Non-conformist, a Separatist, a Brownist, an Anabaptist (though owning the same Christ in his very heart and soul) yet because his practice was a testimony against the false church-worship of the common Protestant, must be hunted up and down to courts, imprisoned, fined, banished. And to this day, the Lord can bring forth no birth of his Spirit, but the zealous professor hates, reviles, and seeks to destroy it. If the Lord lay any law upon the conscience, if it be not suit-

able to their apprehensions from the letter, how do they reproach, disdain, revile, and endeavor to render such odious to the magistrates, and to the people!

But why should we wonder at these things? There is no new thing under the sun. The state of the world is just as it always was. The power of Truth in every age hath been still opposed by those who cried up the form. It were a wonder if it should be otherwise. I should much more wonder, if the teachers and professors of this age should own Truth, than that they fight against it, and persecute it. Well, friends and brethren, be strong in the Lord, and faithful to his Truth, in the power of his might: bear the reproach, the afflictions of this age, the persecutions of this your day. Verily your eyes shall see that there is a reward for the righteous, and your hearts shall be satisfied with it, when the children of the kingdom (of this age, as well as of Christ's, and all former ages) shall be shut out in utter darkness, where shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

THE JEW OUTWARD.

Some Exceptions and Arguments of the Jews against Christ's Appearance, &c.

The Jews were once the only outward, visible people of God, who were chosen by God for a peculiar people, who had the promise of, and expected, the Messiah; whose faith and hope of salvation was in him; yea, and at that very time they were looking for him, yet, when he came, he was "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" to them, and they could by no means receive him. They were full of reasonings, and doubts, and contendings about it; but could never, with all their wisdom from the letter, determine that

was he. Though he lived as never man lived; though he spake as never man spake; though he did what never man did; yet still some exception or other they had from the letter of the scriptures, to which his manner of appearance, his conversation, and his doctrine, did not suit in their judgment; and so, after many disputes and debates, they at length delivered him up to death, as a blasphemer, a deceiver, a seducer of the people.

Many exceptions and arguments they had against him; against his descent, his doctrine, his practices, his miracles, his followers, &c., which I shall refer to heads, to make them more obvious.

1. They excepted at his descent and kindred. "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us." Mat. xiii. 55, 56. What! this that glorious Messiah! the great king of glory, of whom all the prophets prophesied and spoke great things! Surely it cannot be. "And they were offended in him." ver. 57. It was this made them they could not receive that heavenly doctrine of his, which otherwise might have been life to them, when he taught them that he was "the bread of life that came down from heaven:" but they murmured because of it, and said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven." John vi. 41, 42. So again, John vii. 27. "We know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." This was a close argument, and was raised up to eat out a deep impression of his being the Christ, as may appear from the foregoing verse. He speaketh indeed boldly, and deep things, &c., as if he were the Christ; but how can it be he, seeing it is known from whence he comes?

2. At his country, or place of his education and residence, which was Nazareth of Galilee. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" John i. 46. "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" John vii. 41. "Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." ver. 52.

3. *At the time and season of his coming.* He came (as to their sense) before Elias. With this argument they pinched the disciples, as is signified in that query of theirs to Christ, "Why then say the Scribes, that Elias must first come?" Mat. xvii. 10. This could not but be a sore argument in the mouth of the Scribes, who might reason with the disciples on this wise: what poor, ignorant, sottish, deluded people are you, to own this man for your master, and take him for the Messiah! Elias must first come, and restore all things. If this man preached ever so heavenly doctrine, and did ever so many miracles; yet, if he pretend to be the Messiah, he can be but a deceiver: for the true Messiah comes not before Elias; and every one knows that Elias is not yet come, nor his work of restoring all things so much as begun.

4. His doctrine administered abundance of offence to them, and they were continually stumbling at it. That heavenly doctrine, mentioned a little before, that he was "the bread of life," they murmured at. John vi. 41. When he did but say "God was his Father," they presently flew out upon him, and said, "he made himself equal with God." John v. 18. When he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," they misunderstood him, and brought it forth as an argument against him at the time of his suffering, Mat. xxvi. 61. and cast it as a jeer in his teeth. Mat. xxvii. 40. When he did but say to the man sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee;" the Scribes and Pharisees presently exclaimed against him, "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Luke v. 21. and vii. 49. When he preached very powerfully against covetousness, the Pharisees derided him. Luke xvi. 14. Yea, when he did but preach a parable or two about "the widow of Sarepta, and Naaman the Syrian" (it coming a little close to their state) "all they in the synagogue were so filled with wrath, that they rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, to cast him down headlong." Luke iv. 28, 29. At his saying that "Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and he saw it, and was glad;" the Jews replied, "Thou art not

yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" John viii. 57. How absurd and impossible was this to them, that a man of not fifty years should say, that Abraham (who lived so many ages before) saw his day! And instead of giving them an argument to demonstrate it to them, he only returns them a more confident affirmation, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am;" ver. 58. which so enraged them, that "they took up stones to cast at him." ver. 59. Now mark: the life speaks what it sees and knows, and so it gives forth its testimony. The wise professor, not being in the life, cannot know or receive the testimony; but calls for arguments and demonstrations to his wise eye. The life refuseth to answer him; but instead thereof, only affirmeth the thing more strongly and confidently. This, being so far from that which he looks for, and requires to satisfy him, kindles disdain and rage in him: and he looks upon the life, for this way of proceeding, as worthy to be stoned. What! when they should lay before Christ a fair argument, whereby they might plainly convince him by evident reason, that he could not see Abraham's day, and he, instead of answering it, should only bring forth a more confident affirmation, would not men's wisdom in this age, even hiss at such a thing? Yet this was the way of the life then, in that day; and the life may, at his pleasure, take the same way again now, to offend the wise and knowing.

When he spake of his being "the good Shepherd," and of his "laying down his life for his sheep" (and of the hireling's flying, in time of danger, to save himself), John x. 11, 12. many of the Jews said, "He hath a devil, and is mad. Why hear ye him?" ver. 20. Many of them that were then the people of God (the separated people; for the Jews were a people separated from the world, and studied the law, and observed the ordinances of Moses) looked upon Christ as a man not fit to be heard speak; but as a mad-man, as one that had a devil, as one that might have great power of deceit from the devil, to bewitch men from truth. "Why hear ye him?" What good can ye expect from him? "He hath a devil, and is mad." Oh, how desperately will bold

flesh venture to judge of the life and power of God, when it hath got a little knowledge from the Scriptures, and a way of worship, duties, and ordinances!

When he said, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30. "they took up stones again to stone him," ver. 31. and made no question but they did well in doing of it, as appears by their answer to his demand, for which of his good works they stoned him. They replied very confidently, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because thou being a man, makest thyself God." ver. 32, 33. And when he said, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death," John viii. 51. then said the Jews unto him, "Now we know thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead. Who makest thou thyself?" ver. 53. Were not Abraham and the prophets holy men? Had not they the sayings of God? And did they not keep the sayings of God? Yet they are dead. Such a kind of speech as this must needs be from the devil. Now thou makest manifest from what spirit thou speakest. "Now we know thou hast a devil." And indeed how could the professors of that age digest such things, being so contrary to what appeared to them to be certain truth in the Scriptures.

And there were many other things as hard to them; though the exceptions which might or did arise in their minds, are not particularly mentioned; as when he saith, "I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them." John x. 7, 8. How offensive must this doctrine needs have been to them, going carnally to understand and reason about it? What! were all the prophets and holy men before thee thieves and robbers? Did the truth never come till thou broughtest it? What became of our fore-fathers in former ages? Were they none of them God's sheep? Did none of them find the door? For thou sayest thou art "the door," and thou hast been but of late. And whereas thou sayest the sheep did not hear them; that is utterly false; for they did hear Moses, and they did hear the prophets: and we have their writings, and will keep to them for

all thee, let who will be thy sheep. When he said, that "he came not to send peace, but division," Matt. x. 25. how readily might they reply, that his own mouth discovered him not to be the Messiah, the Saviour, the Peace-Maker; but the worker of divisions, the cause of breaches in families, setting three against two, and two against three! Luke xxi. 51. When he said, "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin," John viii. 34. might not they well except against this, as condemning the whole generation of the righteous, and making null the way of sacrifices, which God had appointed for sins committed at any time by his people, which could not but pre-suppose their commission of sin? Did not Abraham, Isaac, David, Moses, and the rest of the prophets, all commit sin, and were they the servants of sin? He taught also that the children of the kingdom should be cast into utter darkness. Mat. viii. 12. Oh, how harsh would this sound in the ears of the zealous, professing Jew, who was waiting and hoping for the kingdom! So in his doctrine there seemed many contradictions to the fleshly understanding; for one while he said, "I judge no man;" for I came not to condemn the world: and yet was not he continually judging and condemning the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Priests, the Lawyers, and that whole generation of professors? So again, he came to seek and save that which was lost; to preach the gospel of peace; and yet another while he saith, he came not to send peace, but a sword, and to kindle a fire, and to set men at variance, &c. Again, one while he said, "I and my Father are one;" another time, "My Father is greater than I." One while he bid men do as the Scribes and Pharisees taught; another while he bid men beware of the leaven or doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Mat. xvi. 12.

But to what purpose should I heap up any more instances? O thou that readest this, wait to know in thyself the ear that cannot hear Christ's doctrine; while thou condemnest the Jews, do not run into the same error of unbelief and gainsaying; but wait to know the voice of Christ in this day, and to receive the ear that can hear it; for

though thou shouldst be willing to hear, yet thou canst not till thy ear be opened. Nicodemus, who could acknowledge Christ "a teacher come from God," yet could not receive the doctrine of the new birth from him. John iii. 4. And there were many things the disciples themselves were not able to bear: for when, at a certain time, he spake of "giving his flesh to eat," not only the Jews, John vi. 52. but they also, stumbled. ver. 61. And who is there among professors that can now bear it, or receive Christ's own interpretation of it? who saith, that "the flesh" (which they understood) "profiteth nothing;" but the flesh which he meant was "spirit and life." ver. 63.

5. *At his practices and conversation.* "How is it that he eateth with publicans and sinners." Mark ii. 16. "Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber; a friend of publicans and sinners." Luke vii. 14. "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." Luke vii. 39. At the publicans and sinners drawing nigh to hear him, the Pharisees and Scribes were offended, and murmured, saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Luke xv. 1, 2. And when he went to Zaccheus's house, they all murmured, saying, "that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." Luke xix. 7.

Again; because he healed on the sabbath, and justified his disciples in plucking of ears of corn on the sabbath, "they were filled with madness, and communed what they might do to him," Luke vi. 3. "and took counsel how they might destroy him." Mark iii. 5, 6. Another time, the ruler of the synagogue spake with indignation about it. Luke xiii. 14. Yea, "the Jews did persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had healed a man, and bid him take up his bed and walk, on the sabbath-day." John v. 8, 16. And some of them made it a strong argument against him, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day." John ix. 16. What! come from God, and be a breaker of ordinances! Can these two stand together? Read and consider. What more strict ordinance of God under the law

than the sabbath? What one ordinance more conducing to the honor and worship of God? Did not their whole religion and worship much depend upon it? How could this possibly but be a great offence to them in that spirit, and literal wisdom from the scriptures, wherein they stood? Yet Christ, in his fleshly appearance, was Lord of the sabbath; and in his spiritual appearance he doth not lose his dominion.

Again; they excepted against him, that he did not teach his disciples to fast and pray, as John did, Luke v. 33. but could suffer them to transgress the traditions of the elders. Mat. xv. 2. He was not strict after the Jewish way of devotion, nor strict after John's way neither; but against the traditions of the godly elders of the Jewish church; against sanctifying of the Lord's sabbath (justifying his disciples in plucking ears of corn thereon; whereas their fore-fathers the Jews were not so much as to gather manna on that day); against fasting and prayer: for he justified his disciples in that they did not fast and pray as John did, saying, "How could they mourn while the bridegroom was with them?" Mat. ix. 15. And consider which way the Jews (in the state they stood) could understand such an answer as this, to rest satisfied therewith.

6. They excepted "against his miracles," partly because he did them on the sabbath-day, John ix. 16. whereupon, they concluded he could not be of God; for if he had been of God, he would have observed the day which God commanded: and if he wrought them not by the power of God, by whose power then must he work them? So they concluded, "He casteth out devils by the prince of devils." Mat. ix. 34. "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils." Mark iii. 34. And having thus concluded in themselves, there was no ear open in them to hear any thing that might be said to the contrary. And again, partly because he did not answer their wills, in giving them such a sign as they required: for this was still their tone, "Master, we would see a sign from thee." Mat. xii. 38. "What sign showest thou to us, seeing that thou dost these things?" John ii. 18. And they more particularly express

what sign; they would have a "sign from heaven." Luke xi. 18. "What sign showest thou, that we may see and believe thee?" John vi. 30. We are ready to be convinced, we are ready to believe, if thou wouldst give us sufficient ground of believing in thee. As for all thy healing people, and casting out devils, Beelzebub, the prince of devils, may furnish thee with power wherewith to deceive and bewitch us from the law and ordinances of Moses, which we are sure are of God; but show us a sign from heaven, or else blame us not for not leaving Moses to run after thee.

7. They excepted *at the testimony which the Spirit of God in him gave concerning him.* When he spake the inward testimony, which the Spirit of God gave from within, saying, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," John viii. 13. they presently cried out, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true." ver. 14. Mark his answer: "It is written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true; I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." ver. 17, 18. How would such an answer pass now in these days, though the same life should speak it? Would not the wise professors of this age even hoot at it? Yet the thing is known at this day, even the life which the Father begets, and the Father's testifying of it, and with it. And thou that readest this, mightest know it, couldst thou wait in the loss of thine own life, wisdom, and knowledge, for it.

8. They excepted *against his disciples and followers*, which were women, publicans, and sinners; the common people, yea, the meanest, the poorest, and most ignorant (in their account), who were fittest to be deluded and led away. "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him? But this people who know not the law are accursed." John vii. 47, 48, 49. The common people, the ignorant people, the unsettled people, such as know not the law, such as understand not the Scriptures, they run after him, and cry him up; but which of the settled ones, which of the truly zealous ones, which of the wise

men in the knowledge of the law and prophets, which of the orthodox Scribes and Pharisees, who keep close to Moses, which of these believe in him? Whom of them can he deceive? As for the heady people, who, for want of knowledge from the Scriptures, are ready to run after every new fangle, they are not worth the minding, they are *accursed;* and therefore no marvel, though God give them up to follow this deceiver, and to cry up his new light, and forsake the good old light of Moses and the prophets.

9. They excepted against him, that he did not rebuke his disciples, and the multitude (spreading their garments, cutting down branches from the trees, and strewing them in the way), with the children that cried Hosanna to him, as he rode on the ass's colt to Jerusalem; but he rather justified them. Luke xix. 31. and Mat. xxi. 15, 16. What a ridiculous and vain-glorious piece of pageantry would this seem to the fleshly-wise eye?

10. That he did not show sufficient authority for what he did. "By what authority dost thou these things; and who gave thee this authority?" &c. Mark xi. 28. Thou takest upon thee great authority over the people of God, over their teachers, yea, over God's temple, sabbath, and ordinances; but where is thy authority so to do? Show us that, &c.

11. They excepted when he spoke of his sufferings and death. "We have heard in our law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou the Son of man must be lifted up! Who is the Son of man?" John xii. 34. Surely he that is to be lifted up cannot be the Christ that is to abide for ever, and not to die! So that here, in one breath, thou hast overthrown all that thou hast been setting up by thy preaching and miracles. Now which way could they understand this thing? Nay, the very disciples themselves could not swallow it, but were startled at it; and Christ was fain to hide it a long time from them. And yet if there be any thing held forth now in these days, by the same Spirit (as concerning light and perfection, or other truths which are seen in the Spirit), because men cannot apprehend them

with their carnal understanding, and make them agree with their carnal knowledge of the Scriptures, what liberty do they take to themselves to speak both against the truth itself, and also against them who have seen these things in the Spirit, and speak them from the Spirit! Now whosoever becomes a disciple, must wait in the obedience to know the doctrine, and not think to enter with that wisdom and carnal reasoning from the Scriptures, which the Scribes and Pharisees, and professors of that age were shut out with.

There were many other things which they could not but except against; as at his answers to their questions, to which sometimes he was silent, and gave no answer at all; at other times, he answered not directly, but in parables. And how offensive is this to man's wisdom, who requires a positive and direct answer! And sometimes his answers might seem quite from the thing, as John xii. 34, 35.

His not giving respect to persons (for it was a known thing of him that he regarded not men's persons. Mat. xvii. 16.) could not be very pleasing to them, who loved greetings, and sought honor one of another. He showed not respect to Herod the king; but spake contemptuously of him, as men would account it: "Go," saith he, "and tell that fox." He did not show respect to the reverend and grave doctors of the law; nay, nor to the high priest himself. Nay, he did not show respect to his own disciples; but said to Peter (when he mildly and affectionately desired his death might be avoided) "Get thee behind me, Satan." How harsh and rough a reply might this seem! If Peter had erred, through his affection and tenderness to his Master, a meek spirit would gently have informed him; but to call him devil, and say, "Get thee behind me;" what kind of spirit doth this savor of? would that professing Jew say, who knoweth not the true meekness, but seeks after a fleshly meekness, which is a servant to the fleshly wisdom and prudence, but not true-born. Nay, he did not speak respectfully to his own mother (as man's spirit, by its rule of respect, would judge and condemn him); but said, "Woman, what

have I to do with thee?" John ii. 4. And in a manner denied all his relations. Mat. xii. 48.

Lastly (to instance no more), at his harsh censures of all the professors of that age (who observed the law of Moses, and Israel's statutes), with all their laborious and godly teachers; justifying none but himself, and what he taught, and a few of his followers. He told them, that they had not the "love of God in them." John v. 42. Did not this, think ye, seem to them a very harsh charge? And why not the love of God? Because they did not follow him and his new doctrine? Yea, would they be ready to say, they did love God, and kept his commandments, sabbaths, and ordinances, which he transgressed.

He laid this also to their charge, that they did not believe Moses. John v. 46. What an unjust charge might this seem, when they were so zealous for Moses; and their very dislike of him, and controversy against him, were for the sake of the law and ordinances of Moses!

Another charge he laid to them was, that they were not the children of Abraham, or of God; but of the devil. John viii. 39. 42. 44. What a rash, censorious man might they account him, thus to speak of them, who were the human seed of Abraham, who were such strict observers of God's laws and ordinances (which is the property of his children), and such enemies to the devil, that they would not be drawn from the truths and way of worship taught by Moses and the prophets; no, not by all the miracles he could work!

He called them "a faithless and perverse generation." Mat. i. 17, 18.

He told them that they did not *know God;* though they said with confidence that he was their God. John xii. 54, 55. How could they bear this? They had been studying the law and the prophets, and had a great stock of knowledge from thence, and were strict and exact in worship (some of them, as well as Paul, might be, *according to the law, blameless*). And now to be told that they did not know God! Nay, he that aboundeth in knowledge, devotion, and wor-

ship, yet not being in the life and pure power of the Spirit, hath not one dram of the true knowledge.

He told them that they should "die in their sins." John viii. 21. (Oh, hard word, and severe judgment!) And yet he had told them a little before, that he judged no man. ver. 15. Yea, they did think themselves exceedingly wronged by him; and thought that no man that had any thing of God in him could speak such things, but only one that was an enemy to the people of God, and led by the spirit of Satan. To this effect they express themselves, ver. 48. of that chapter, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"

Yea, when he charged them with *going about to kill him*, they seemed in themselves so clear in their own consciences, that they answered, "Thou hast a devil. Who goes about to kill thee?" John vii. 29. How easily might they close up the controversy, and, by this very thing, conclude him to be a false prophet! He says, we went about to kill him; when (God knows) there was not such a thing in our hearts. Can this man be a true prophet? Yet Christ knew the professing Jew to be the murderer, and, in and for his religion's sake, still seeking to slay him. And there is no such murderer of Christ (the life) upon the earth, as the zealous professor and worshipper out of the life. He that is in the life cannot persecute any man; he that is out of the life cannot but persecute him that is in the life. Hereby the true and false Christian may be discerned by the weakest simple and single eye.

And then for their teachers and expounders of the law, how exceedingly bitter did he seem against them! and how heavy things was he continually laying to their charge! He called them blind guides, hypocrites, painted sepulchres, graves which appear not, and pronounced woe upon woe against them. Read that one place, Mat. xxiii. 33. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?" What! speak thus of our zealous teachers, who study the law, are strict in practising of the ordinances, and take such pains to instruct us in the mind

of God from Moses and the prophets! Was such a man as this fit to live? Nay, and he does not show a gospel spirit. Mark how sharp and bitter his words come from him (for indeed a sharper speech, with greater vehemency and indignation of spirit, can hardly be spoken); and they might seem to aggravate this sharp condemnation of his from his own confession. He himself had confessed that they sat in Moses' chair. Now he might have shown some honor to Moses' chair, and to their office, which was of God, and doubtless good, and not have gone about to make them thus odious in the eyes of the people. Nay, he himself had bid men do as they said, but in ver. 3. of that chapter. Now was it likely that ever men should mind what they said, or observe their doctrine, when he had thus represented them "as oppressors of the conscience," ver. 4. "as devourers of widow's houses, and making long prayers in hypocrisy," ver. 15. as "making their proselytes more the children of hell than themselves," ver. 15. as "neglecters of the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," ver. 23. as "appearing righteous to men, but full of hypocrisy and iniquity," ver. 28. as "of the same generation that killed the prophets," ver. 31, 32. as "deceivers;" as "such as led into the ditch; and bid men beware of their leaven;" were not these good kind of encouragements for people to hear them? Yea, he charged them with "shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, and not going in themselves, nor suffering men to enter that were going in." ver. 13. How could they observe what they taught without hearing them? And would Christ wish any to hear such men as these? Yet for all this, without doubt, they were not without their justifications against Christ in these respects; and also had their charges, on the other hand, ready against him. Now, how did they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men? Did they not teach the law, and direct men to the ordinances of God, and open the prophets' words to them? Was this shutting up the kingdom of heaven? and would not they suffer men to enter? Why, their work was to win people to their profession; they would compass sea

and land to make a proselyte. How stiffly might the Jews have pleaded against Christ, that he did slander their godly ministers, who were very painful and zealous in opening the Scriptures, and teaching the way of God! Nay, he himself could not deny but they taught well; for he himself saith, "Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." Mat. xxiii. 3. But mark now, that ye may understand the thing. It is thus: any teaching or expounding the Scriptures out of the life shuts up the kingdom: for the life is the kingdom, and words from the life yield the savor of the kingdom; but words out of it, though ever so good and true, reach not to the life in another; but only build up a knowledge in the contrary wisdom, and teach to hold the truth in the unrighteousness, where Satan's kingdom stands, and where he hath the dominion over all that is brought thither. And so this kind of teaching and knowledge shuts up the door and way of life, and must be lost, before the kingdom can be found.

They shut up the true kingdom; but they opened another kingdom; they opened the kingdom another way (which was in truth shutting of it); and they had disciples and children of the kingdom, whom they tickled with the hope of life, and fed with promises and comforts; but these the Lord would shut out. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness." Mat. viii. 11, 12. This is true at this day in the present dispensation, as it was then in that dispensation; though men make it a great accusation against us, charging us that we say none are the people of God but ourselves, and as if all were damned but we. These are men's harsh and unsavory expressions; we use not to speak after this manner, but soberly open the state of the thing as it stands in the truth (and as it hath been revealed unto us by him who is true, and cannot lie); which is thus:

That through which men are saved, is the dispensation of Truth in their age. The measure of light which God gives

forth in every age, that is the means and proper way of salvation in that age: and whatever men get, or profess of the knowledge of Truth declared in former ages, yet making use of that to withstand the present dispensation of Truth in their age, they cannot thereby be saved; but may thereby be hardened against that which should save them. And this we are assured of from the Lord, that as the Jews could not be saved by the law of Moses (making use of it in opposition to the shining of the light of God in the prophets in their several ages), nor afterwards could be saved by magnifying and observing both the words of Moses and the prophets, and their belief from thence of a Messiah to come (making use of those things to oppose that appearance of Christ in the flesh, which was the dispensation of their day then); no more can any professors be saved now by the belief of a Christ come, or any thing which they can learn or practise from the Scriptures, making use thereof to oppose the dispensation of this day; which dispensation is the immediate and powerful breaking forth of the light of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people (who have earnestly sought, and in much sorrow and perplexity of spirit longed and waited for him), after this long dark night of the antichristian apostasy.

There remain yet some other exceptions against him, about the time of his suffering death, with his hard usage, which should not wholly be passed over, as:

1. His disrespectful or irreverent answering of the high-priest, as it seemed to them, when he asked him of his doctrine, John xviii. 19. his answer was, that "he spake openly in the world, not in secret; Why askest thou me? Ask them that heard me." Whereupon one of the officers struck him, saying, "Answerest thou the high-priest so?" ver. 22. The plainness and simplicity of the life (which bows to God, and cannot regard man in the transgression) seem rude and unmannerly to the lofty spirit of the world.

2. His silence at the testimonies brought against him, and to the high-priest when he questioned him. Mark xiv. 60, 61. Indeed either the speaking or silence in the life, is of-

fensive to the carnal professor, who knoweth not the law of life in this particular; but can either speak or be silent, according to his own will. This is the difference between the true and the false Christian; the false Christian's knowledge and religion stand in his own will, in his own understanding; he speaks in his own time; both which are crucified in him that is born of the Spirit.

3. When he did speak the truth himself, the high-priest *rent his clothes*, and charged him with blasphemy. Mat. xxvi. 64. And those that were by fell in with the high-priest, and said, he was "guilty of death." ver. 66. Then they "spit on his face, and buffeted him, and smote him, and mocked him, and blind-folded him, and struck him on the face, bidding him prophesy who smote him." Mat. xxvi. 67, 68. and Luke xxii. 63, 64.

When they brought him to Pilate, they would have Pilate take it for granted that he was an evil-doer, and worthy of death: for when Pilate asked for their accusation against him, they answer, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." John xviii. 29, 30. Pilate refusing so to proceed in judgment, ver. 31. they begin to bring in their charges: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a king." Luke xxiii. 2. Pilate examines him herein; but professes he can find no fault in him at all. John xviii. 38. Then the chief priests accused him of many other things, Mark xv. 3. and were more fierce, saying, "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." (This indeed was his great offence, he taught with the authority of the Spirit, and not as the Scribes). Then Pilate sent him to Herod (where the chief priests and scribes stood vehemently accusing him), who questioned him much; but he answered him nothing. And "Herod, with his men of war, set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him back to Pilate." Luke xxiii. 9, 10, 11. Pilate professed that he could not find him guilty of this second charge, neither of perverting the peo-

ple, ver. 14. therefore, chastising him, he would release him, ver. 18. but the people, by the persuasion of the chief priest and elders, cried all at once, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas," ver. 18. but let him be crucified; "Crucify him, crucify him!" ver. 21, &c. Now when Pilate had scourged him, and the soldiers had stripped him, and put him on a scarlet robe, and had put a crown of platted thorns on his head, and a reed in his right hand, and had bowed the knee to him in mockery, and spit on him, and smote him with a reed, he brings him forth to them again, hoping this might appease their malice, and they might be content to spare his being crucified. They tell him they have a law, and by their law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. John xix. 4. 8. (See how they turn and wind every way to make the innocent an offender, and to make some law, of one kind or other, take hold of him!) But when all their accusations would not prevail with Pilate, but still (from the sense of his innocency) he had a mind to release him, they used another subtle artifice, telling him, "If he let this man go, he was not Cæsar's friend." John xix. 12. This carries it with Pilate: now he disputes no further; but delivers him to their will. Luke xxiii. 5.

Now thou who readest this, take heed of judging the Jews for all this wickedness, while the same nature is alive in thee which did all this in them: for assuredly thou (in whom that nature which did it in them is not subdued) wouldst have done the same thing, hadst thou lived in those days. Thou that disdainest and persecutest the appearance of Christ in this age, wouldst have disdained and have persecuted his appearance in that age. Do not deceive thy soul.

The Jews did as little think that ever they should have put a prophet, or any good man to death (much less the Messiah) as thou canst: yea, they could blame their fathers for killing the prophets, and say, If they had lived in those days, they would not have done it; and yet dost not thou read what they did? The persecuting Spirit was ever blind, and could in no age read its evil and bitter nature, and its

enmity against the life and power. Be not thou blind in thy day, as they were in theirs; and an enemy, under pretence of being a friend.

4. Another exception or argument against him, about the time of his suffering death, was, that he did not put forth his power to save himself from the cross; "He saved others, let him save himself," if he be Christ, the chosen of God. Luke xxiii. 35. Is it likely that this is the Son of God, and that he did so many miracles by the power of God, and cannot now save himself from the cross? This his suffering death on the cross did a little stumble some of the disciples, as may appear, Luke xxiv. 20, 21. and was enough to have overturned the faith of any which stood not in the Spirit, and in the power. The soldiers also could mock, and manage this argument against him, saying, "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself." Luke xxiii. 37. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Mat. xxvii. 39. 40. Likewise the chief priests, with the Scribes and elders mocked among themselves, saying, "He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let Christ, the king of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see, and believe." Mark xv. 31, 32. One of the thieves also railed on him, saying, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." Luke xxiii. 39. And when he cried out to his God, "Eli, Eli, &c." they derided him: "This man calleth for Elias; let us see whether Elias will come and save him." Mat. xxvii. 47. 49. And after he was dead, the chief priests and Pharisees spake of him as of a known deceiver, ver. 63. and seem, in a pious zeal for the church, to take care that there be no further occasion, after his death, for the reviving and spreading of his deceit and errors. ver. 94. Thus the Holy One, the Pure One, the Just and True One, (in whose heart and mouth was no guile found) was numbered among transgressors, accounted a deceiver, and put to death as a blasphemer, by the zealous priests and professors of that age, who were so confident of

the righteousness of their cause (on the behalf of the law of Moses, and their sabbaths, temple, &c.) against him, that when Pilate washed his hands, as clear of his blood, all the people answered, and said, "His blood be on us, and on our children. Mat. xxvii. 25.

Now let men consider what the great exceptions are, which they have against the living appearance of Christ in his Spirit, now towards the close of the apostasy, and against us his witnesses, whom the Lord hath called forth to testify his name. Many exceptions men have against our persons, our doctrine, our practices, for want of miracles, &c. Is this generation more wise or more just in their exceptions than the former was? Consider the main ones a little.

Their great exceptions against our doctrine are:

1. *That we preach up a light within, and that he that receiveth that light, receiveth a perfect gift; and growing up in it, groweth up to perfection, which in this life (through faith and obedience to this light or perfect gift) may be attained, and the body of sin put off, and the new man, Christ, put on.*

Ans. Indeed we cannot but preach up the Light within, and declare unto men how great things it hath done for us; even that which we could never by any means meet with from any light without. And this is perfect, and tends to make perfect, carrying on its work daily. Now he that feels its virtue, cannot doubt of its power. He that seeth the body of sin daily going off, cannot doubt but he may be stripped. Indeed, if a man strive against sin in his own will, and by his own gathered knowledge, he cannot get much ground, and so it is hard for him to believe perfection. But he that feels unity with that which is perfect, cannot but acknowledge that it is able to perfect him, and in faith and patience is encouraged to hope and wait for it.

2. *That we deny that Christ which died at Jerusalem, and his imputed righteousness, and set up an inherent righteousness.*

Ans. We know no other Christ than that which died at Jerusalem, only we confess our chief knowledge of him is in the Spirit. And as Christ said in the days of his flesh, that the way to know his Father, was to know him; and he

that knew him knew the Father also; so we now witness, that the way to know Christ is to know the Spirit; and that he that knoweth the Spirit, knoweth Christ also; with whom Christ is one, and from whom he cannot be separated. And as for imputed righteousness, it is too precious a thing to us, to be denied by us. That which we deny, is men's putting it out of its place, applying it to them who are not in the true faith, and walk not in the true light: for in the true light, where the fellowship is with the Father and the Son, there alone the blood cleanseth. 1 John i. 7. And there alone the righteousness is imputed to him, who is cleansed by the blood in the light, and not to him who knows it not. And as for inherent righteousness, we meddle not with that word, but this we say; That our life exceedingly lies in feeling the righteousness of Christ wrought and revealed in us; and we wish men could come out of the reasoning about it, into the feeling of the same thing with us; for then we are sure they would not so sharply, nor so long contend.

3. *That we deny the ordinances, and means of salvation.*

Ans. We deny nothing that the apostles and Christians formerly practised; nor do we deny any thing that any now practise in the light, and in the faith; but the setting up of such things in the will, that we deny; or the imitating these without the command of the Spirit, that we deny also. And this we testify, that antichrist crept in here, and that they are his great cover to keep men from the life; and therefore warn men to mind the life, and to take heed they be not kept from the substance by the shadows, where antichrist lies lurking, to bewitch from the substance. And we are sure, that these in antichrist's hands, are not the means of salvation; but keep from the sight of the holy city, where the life and salvation are. And we read that the outward court was given to the Gentiles; who "trod under foot the holy city." Rev. xi. 2. And we have found by experience, that, while we ourselves were crying up the outward court, we did trample under foot the city, though we then knew it not.

Their exceptions against our persons are, that we are ig-

norant, illiterate, and also unsettled persons, who have still been seeking up and down, &c.

Ans. What persons are fittest for God to make use of, towards the recovery of his people out of the apostasy? Doth not God choose that which is weak and mean and contemptible, that his glory might the more appear? Is not this a more likely way for him to steal upon the world, than if he appeared in the wise and learned ones? And among whom is his appearance to be expected? Among those who are settled upon their lees in the apostasy; or among those who have mourned, panted, and sought to come out of it, and could not be settled without his appearing to them, and fixing their feet upon the rock? But have we been unsettled, since God hath fastened us on the living foundation? Nay, here is no more going out; but he that abides faithful remains a pillar in the house of God.

Men except likewise against our practices, as that we show not respect to persons, and that we are not strict (after their manner) in duties, &c.

Ans. We have heard that voice, "Fear God, and give glory to him," Rev. xiv. 7. (not only as it is written there, but in Spirit:) and where the Lord is exalted, the glory of the creature falls; read Isa. ii. how all falls in that day, that God alone might be exalted. And we cannot, in this mighty day of the Lord, any longer give to man that honor which he hath gathered in the fall, and which pleaseth the fallen nature, and not that which is born of God. And for duties, we have bewailed, in the sight of the Lord, our former running into duties without his Spirit: and we must confess, we can only pray in the Spirit; sing in the Spirit; wait in the Spirit; speak in the Spirit (as that gives utterance), and not of ourselves, or when we will; but as we see life, strength, and power from on high, leading and assisting us. And our religion consists neither in willing nor running, but in waiting on the Spirit and power of the Lord, to work all in us and for us. All these things we look upon to be our duty, and practise them.

It is likewise excepted against us, that we do not work miracles.

Ans. We point to that which wrought all the outward miracles formerly, and which now worketh great inward miracles in Spirit; and we are sure the same power, which we have received the Gospel in, is of the same healing virtue. But that power worketh according to the purpose of its own will, and not according to the will of man (yea, though Paul had the gift of healing, yet "he left Trophimus at Miletum sick. 2 Tim. iv. 20.); neither was the will or wisdom of man satisfied in all those miracles which Christ and the apostles wrought. It is enough for us to feel and live in the moving of the power; in which we rejoice, and are more satisfied (that by it our names are written in the Book of Life) than we could be by any such outward and visible appearance and manifestation of it. But if we did work outward miracles, yet if thou hadst not an inward eye to see them with, thou wouldst not be able to distinguish by what power they were wrought.

To what purpose should I mention any more particulars? Is it not enough? Oh! fear before the Lord! and do not lose the present dispensation of life through mistake (or because ye cannot have things suited to your corrupt wills); but know the Gospel, which is an inward dispensation, and doth not consist in outward shadows, but in inward virtue, life, and power: "For the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Come to wait for that, to feel that, to unite there; and then we shall not differ about that which is outward. But it is antichrist's way, by the magistrates' power, to force an agreement about the outward, which destroys that tenderness of conscience which preserves the inward.

And now let me put one question to you; Where is the deceit of the ages after Christ to be expected? Did the Jews deny Moses and the prophets' writings, or ordinances? Nay, were they not very zealous for these? And were not these their cover, under which they persecuted Christ, and vented all their malice against him? So can it be expected

now, that the deceivers of this age should deny the apostles' writings, or the practices therein mentioned; or is it not rather to be expected, that under their crying up of these, they should hide their enmity against the life? Search and see, hath not every after-age of professors taken up the words and practices of them who were persecuted in the foregoing age; and under the profession of those words and practices, have hid their spirit of persecution? There is a remnant only among professors to be saved; the generality of them have still been persecutors, creeping into the form, getting that for a cover upon their backs, and then fighting against the life and power. Oh! wait on the Lord in his fear, that ye may be found worthy to know the persecuted truth on the one hand, and the persecuting spirit on the other hand, in this day of large profession, and also of bitter persecution!

Now what might be the cause, or how could it come to pass, that the zealous worshippers of that age should thus err in their zeal, and be thus heady and rash against him, whom they looked for to be their Saviour? How came they thus to *err in vision, and stumble in judgment*, in so weighty a matter? Show unto us the cause, that we may see whether the same cause be not in us: for undoubtedly if it be, it will produce the same effect, and so we may ignorantly draw upon our heads the same heavy wrath in our day, that they did in their day.

Ans. The causes were very many; I may mention some few of the principle ones; which if they be seen into and removed, by that power which is able to do it, such as are of a more inferior influence, will not be able to stand.

1. One cause of their blind zeal, and bitterness against Christ, was, *Their ignorance of the Scriptures, and of the power of God.* If they had known the Scriptures in the true light, they could not but have known Christ, from whom the Scriptures were given forth; and if they had known the power of God, they could not but have known him who came in the power; yea, who was the power. They had knowledge enough of both these one way; that is in the

etter: they knew the words of scripture (they could make arge expositions of them), they knew what was said in scripture concerning the power of God, but they knew not the thing itself; and so turned against it, and made use of the words (which came from it, and testified of it) against it.

2. A second cause of this their sad miscarriage in their zeal, was, *Their putting the law and ordinances, and writings of the prophets, out of their proper places.* They exceedingly magnified and cried them up, in that carnal way wherein they apprehended and practised them, but understood not the right end and use of them. And by these means, practising the shadows in the carnal mind, they lost the substance, which the proper use of the shadows was to have pointed them unto.

3. *Their high conceits of the goodness of their state in relation to God, and of the certainty of their knowledge of the truths of God from Moses and the prophets.* They were confident they knew God aright, and that he was their Father, and that they were his children and people. And so Christ appearing in a seeming contrariety to these (notwithstanding all his powerful preaching and miracles), they made no question but they might boldly conclude him not to be of God.

4. *Christ's coming in a way that they looked not for him.* They had concluded from the Scriptures how Christ must appear; and he coming in a far different manner, they could not own him, but looked upon him as a deceiver, one that pretended to be Christ, but was not like to what the Scripture said of Christ. So what the scripture saith of Christ's second coming, is hid as much from the carnal eye of professors in this age, as what was said concerning his first coming, was hid from them in their age; and he will steal upon them as a thief, at a time, and in a way, and after a manner, that they expect not.

(Which is the main one, and cause of all the former.) *Because they were from the light within*, from the true light in their own hearts and consciences. The light within is the ordinance of God, and the proper means to give the knowledge of him (2 Cor. iv. 6.); without which it was

never received under any dispensation: for the light that shines abroad, or from without, can alone be known and received by the light that shines within. Christ himself opens this in a parable; "The light of the body" (saith he) "is the eye; if, therefore, thine eye be single" (clear without beams or motes) "thy whole body shall be full of light." Mat. vi. 22. But if that be evil, if that be dark, if that be closed by the god of this world, all Moses' words, all the prophets' words, yea, all Christ's and his apostles' words, cannot give thee light. Can I see the light of the sun, moon, or stars, or of any fire or candle, if I have not a natural eye, and if that natural eye be not open? So neither can I see the light of any dispensation of life, if I have not an eye within me open, wherewith to see it. So that that which gives me the sight of the things of God, is the eye which God hath given me. By that may be read the eternal power and Godhead in the creatures, in the books of Moses and the prophets, in the writings of the evangelists and the apostles, as the Spirit leads and opens. Yea, the same Spirit, that opened to those without books, may again open to any of us without books at his pleasure (and will not be limited to books); and we then may read also as they did, even within in the Spirit, and in the immediate life; but without this, can none of those things of God be read aright. Now the God of this world had blinded this eye in the Jews; yea, they themselves had "stopped their ears, and closed their eyes," &c., they would not see this way, they would not be converted and healed this way. They would keep up the knowledge which they had gathered from Moses and the prophets, without this eye; and with that they would see, or not at all.

Thus being from the light within, they could not see the place of life within, where life is to be received: they could not see the womb of wisdom, which is within, and so could not enter in to it, and be born again. And being not born of the wisdom, how could they justify the wisdom? Being not [illegible] of the light, how could they know or own Christ, [illegible]ning and appearance was in the light? For that

appearance of Christ the life, in that body of flesh, could not be discerned by all men's wisdom in the letter (the disciples themselves came not so to know it); but "my Father which is in heaven hath revealed it to you." And mark it: the disciples who were illiterate, and not so knowing of the scriptures that were written of Christ, yet they knew Christ: but the Scribes and Pharisees, who were very skilful in the letter, could not know him. What was the reason? The reason lay in the difference of the eye, or light, wherewith they looked: the one looked with an outward eye, the other with an inward eye. And a little inward light will do that, which a great deal of outward light will not do. And this I can certainly affirm, that all the light that men can gather from the Scriptures, cannot give them the knowledge of Christ as he hath appeared in this age; nay, nor as he hath appeared in any age, since the days of the apostles: but a little true inward light will give the knowledge of this thing, and open those scriptures infallibly (in its season) which all the generations of wise and learned men have been controverting and disputing about, in that wisdom and searching spirit which is never to understand them. This then is the main and full reason of this deep error of the Jews, and their desperate splitting upon the rock, which would have saved them. *They were begotten of the letter, which was given forth in former ages; but not of the life, which was raised up in their age:* and so they knew not how to turn to the light within, which alone was able to give them the true and certain knowledge of the things of God.

Now consider these things well, O ye professors of this age! and take heed that ye do not fall after the same example of unbelief. "Be not high-minded, but fear." Be not so confident of what you have gathered by your wisdom for truth from the Scriptures (after the manner that they were, of what they had gathered by their wisdom); but fear, lest ye should be mistaken as they were: and wait for the opening of that eye in you which was shut in them; even the true eye, in the true light, by the holy anointing; where there never was nor can be any mistake. The Jews fell by

unbelief. Unbelief of What? They believed the Scriptures, they believed according to that knowledge they had gathered from the Scriptures; but they did not believe in the living Word. They had a knowledge abiding in them, which they had gathered from the Scriptures, but they had not the living Word abiding in them; and so their faith was but unbelief (for the living faith stands in the belief of the living Word in the heart, which the Scriptures direct to; without the knowledge of which, all knowledge of words is vain; and without faith in which, all faith is vain also). Now saith the apostle to the Gentile Christian, "Thou standest by faith." Rom. xi. 20. By what faith? By faith in that Word in the heart, which they neglected and turned from. Rom. x. 8. For Moses had taught them, after the laws and ordinances about worship and sacrifices, that the Word that they were to obey and do (the Word that could give them life, and make them obedient to all the commandments without) was in their heart and mouth. Deut. xxx. 14. And so the prophet Micah, when they proposed sacrifices and oil, to please God with, brings them to this which was given to them in common with mankind. Mich. vi. 8. For all ordinances and laws and observations and practices without, are but to bring to the life within, which is to be found again there, where it was lost, and still lies slain and hid (even in the field or house where it was lost). And he that seeks abroad, never finds it; but when the candle is lighted in his own house, and he searches narrowly in the field, in his own heart, and the eternal eye begins to open in him; then he cries out, God was in this place, and I was not aware of it. Ah! how the enemy bewitched me, to run from mountain to mountain! and from hill to hill! and hath hereby covered my eye from beholding the mountain of the Lord's house, and from feeling the spring of my life, which I further and further ran from, all the while I was seeking abroad. Therefore, O ye professors, be not so conceited like the Jews, and running after them into their desolation and misery, but learn wisdom by their fall! Do not you set up your ordinances and scriptures, after the manner

that they set up theirs; for this is your danger: for this I clearly, in the light of the Lord, testify to you; that if ye gather a knowledge and wisdom from the letter of the Scriptures, after the manner that they did, without knowledge of the Word within, and without a light within from that Word, ye lose the living faith, ye are but dead branches; and all your knowledge of scriptures, and practices, and faith, and duties, &c., that ye here hold and observe, are but for the fire; and the flames of eternal wrath shall kindle more fiercely upon you because of them, than upon the Jews; for ye stumble upon the same stumbling-stone at which they stumbled and fell, and it will fall upon you also. And as you have more scriptures than they had, and the experience of their fall to warn you; so your destruction will be exceeding dreadful "if you neglect so great salvation;" whereof at this day there are so many living and powerful witnesses, as they are known and owned to be in the light of the Lord, though despised in your exalted and conceited wisdom.

Now to help any honest and single hearts among you over this great stumbling-block of a light within, consider these few things.

1. That all the knowledge, all the true knowledge, that ever ye had of God, was from a light within. I do not deny that ye might receive your knowledge through the Scriptures (and some warmth formerly in those things which ye call ordinances and duties); but that whereby ye received the knowledge was the light within; the eye that God secretly opened in your spirits. This was the way ye then came by it, though ye perhaps might feel the thing, but not know how ye came by it, even as a babe may see truly, but doth not understand its own eye, or know how it sees.

2. While this eye was kept open in you, your knowledge was true in its measure, and serviceable to you, and did draw you nearer to God, making you truly tender, meek, sweet, humble, patient, loving, gentle, and of precious breathings towards God, and after righteousness. Oh! how lovely were you to God in this state! "When Israel was a

child, I loved him." God remembereth at this day the kindness of your youth, and is seeking after you. Oh! why do ye so harden your hearts against him?

3. That wherever this eye is shut, the virtue of the true knowledge is lost, and the sweet fruits thereof wither. The outward part of the knowledge may be retained; yea, perhaps increased, but the life is gone, and the pure sweet savoriness (to God) vanished. And if this eye were but a little opened again in you, your death and unsavoriness might be soon seen and felt in you, in all your knowledge, duties, ordinances; yea, in your very graces and experiences. You have a faith still; yea, but it wants the savor of your former faith: ye have some kind of love, gentleness, and meekness; yea, but it is only a thing formed by the fleshly wisdom and reasoning, but not natural from the living spring, not such as ye once felt, &c., for the true and living eye being shut, that which is then best (or afterwards attained) is held but in the dead part, and serves but to feed death.

4. The great work and design of the enemy of your souls is not to steal away the bulk of your knowledge, or to draw you from ordinances or duties; but to steal the life out of your spirits. This I have experimented from my childhood: I might still have knowledge enough of any kind; but that which I wanted was life; and I was still sick under all the sorts of knowledge that ever I met with, and under all ordinances and duties, for want of the life. The Lord had given my soul a taste of true life, whereby I became unsatisfied without it, and no manner of knowledge or enjoyment could take me up by the way: yea, when through extremity I seemed willing to be content with any thing; yet still my heart was sick after that one thing, which alone could truly ease and satisfy it. Now if the enemy can prevail herein: to blind the inward eye, and steal away the life within, he hath enough. Then abound as much as thou wilt in knowledge, in zeal, in duties, in ordinances, in reading scriptures, praying, meditating, &c., thou art the surer his hereby, and so much the better servant to him: for how much the richer thou art in knowledge, experiences, hopes, and assurance,

without the life and power; so much the more acceptable and honorable and useful art thou in his kingdom.

Therefore see where ye are. Is the inward eye open in you? Do ye know the light within? (Surely he that sees by a light within, can hardly speak evil of it!) Or hath the enemy, by some of his artifices, drawn a veil over that eye, wherewith once ye saw in some measure? Oh! be not slight in a matter of so great weight! Oh! please not yourselves with the eye of the perishing wisdom, with death's eye, and with death's knowledge of scriptures and of the Son of God; which speaks great words of the fame of true wisdom, but is a stranger and enemy to the thing! Oh! life is precious! eternal life is precious! To have the word of God abiding in the heart, and to feel the true light give the true life, who can set a value on this! Ah! do not lose your souls for a trifle; for a little such knowledge of the Scriptures as the earthly part can gather! This I cannot but exceedingly despise, although the Scriptures I truly honor, for their testimony of that whereby I live. If ye see not the way of life by the inward light, which alone can show it, ye lose your souls. If the God of the world hath blinded that eye in you, what are all your treasures of wisdom and knowledge? What are all your hopes? And what will become of you? All these sparks of your own kindling from scriptures will not secure you from the bed of sorrow. O ye several sorts of professors, why will ye die with the uncircumcised? Why will ye go down into the pit, among them that know not the Lord?

But what shall I say to this generation? The spiritually-wise foreseeth the storm, and hideth himself; but the spiritually-foolish run on headily, and are punished. The clouds have long been gathering; but the sick eye cannot discern the signs of the times and seasons; and so because judgment comes not as men expected, they grow hard, and wear off the sense wherewith they were somewhat affected at the first threatening of it: but assuredly both judgment and mercy hasten, and they will come, and will not tarry.

For the same Lord God Almighty, which confounded the

Heathens' Babel (when their sins and vain confidence were ripe), which they built to prevent any future flood (for though they once had the true knowledge of God from an inward light, Rom. i. 21. yet they soon left that, "not liking to retain God in their knowledge," ver. 28. but running out into imaginations, and so building a Babel, whereby their foolish hearts became darkened to the light which God had made to shine in them; which showed what might be known of God unto them. ver. 19.); yea, the Lord God which overthrew the Jews' Babel, which they had built from their knowledge of the laws and ordinances of Moses, and the scriptures written to them (they running out into imaginations also); whereby they likewise thought to prevent "the overflowing scourge" from coming near them, Isa. xxviii. 15.; the same God will overthrow the Christians' Babel, which they have built from the prophets' and apostles' words (by their own imaginations and conceivings in the high-mindedness, out of the fear), whereby they think to escape the deluge of eternal wrath. (For their city also shall be "thrown down with violence, and shall be "found no more at all," Rev. xviii. 21.) And the great work of this day is to discover the rottenness of their wall, and the untemperedness of the mortar wherewith they had daubed it. He that readeth, let him understand; but the uncircumcised in heart and ears cannot.

THE

AXE LAID TO THE ROOT

OF THE

OLD CORRUPT TREE;

AND THE SPIRIT OF DECEIT STRUCK AT IN ITS NATURE,

FROM WHENCE

ALL THE ERROR FROM THE LIFE, AMONG BOTH PAPISTS AND PROTESTANTS, HATH ARISEN, AND BY WHICH IT IS NOURISHED AND FED AT THIS DAY.

IN A

DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FAITH WHICH IS OF MAN, AND THE FAITH WHICH IS OF GOD.

AND

In some ASSERTIONS concerning true FAITH; its NATURE, RISE, &c.; its receiving of CHRIST, its abiding and growing in his living VIRTUE.

WITH

A Warning concerning Adding to and Diminishing from the Scripture in general, and the Prophecies of the Revelations in particular. Discovering what it is, and the great Danger of it, with the only Way of Preservation from it. Whereto is added, A short Touch about the Use of Means.

AS ALSO

A Brief History concerning the State of the Church since the Days of the Apostles.

WITH AN EXHORTATION TO THE PRESENT AGE.

By the Movings of the Life, in a Friend to the Living Truth of the Most High God; but an utter Enemy to the Spirit of Error and Blasphemy, wherever it is found, as well in the strictest of the Protestants, as among the grossest of the Papists.

ISAAC PENINGTON, THE YOUNGER.

PREFACE.

THERE was a glorious day, and bright appearance of Truth in the times of the apostles. They had the true Comforter, who led them into all Truth, and kept them alive in Truth, and Truth alive in them. By this Spirit, they, as living stones, were built up a spiritual house, founded upon Sion, the holy mount; into Jerusalem, the holy city, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of Truth. And here they had their conversation in heaven, with God, the judge of all; with Christ, the Mediator; and with the spirits of just men and the holy angels, which always behold the face of God. They lived in the Spirit, they walked in the Spirit, they prayed in the Spirit, they sung in the Spirit, they worshipped in the Spirit, and in that understanding which the Truth had made free, and had God dwelling in them, and Christ walking in the midst of them; and, by the presence and power of his life in them, were truly dead unto sin, and alive unto God; they being not strivers against sin with man's legal spirit, but by the power of grace, which made them more than conquerors through him that loved them. This was part of the glory of that state, in the day of the sunshine of the gospel.

But, behold! a thick night of darkness overspread the beauty of this! Some false brethren went out from the true church into the world, getting the sheep's clothing, making a great outward appearance, and drew the world after them; yea, and some from the very churches themselves. (How hard was the apostle Paul obliged to plead with the Corinthians about his own apostleship and doctrine, that he might preserve that church from the false apostles!) And when they had gathered a sufficient party in the world, they made head against the true sheep and lambs of Christ, fought with them, and overcame them. And when they had overcome them that had the living testimony of Jesus,

and the true power and presence of the Spirit among them, then they set up their own dead form, making a cry all over the nations of the earth: "Revelation is ceased! there is no looking now for such an infallible Spirit, and such immediate teachings as the Christians had in the apostles' days, who had the anointing to teach them all things;" but they pointed men to traditions, to the church, as they called it (which title the whore hath engrossed since the days of the apostles), or to searchings of the scripture, and reading expositions upon it, and bodies of divinity, formed by the understanding-part in man to instruct the understanding-part. Thus the whole course of religion, and of the knowledge of God, came to be out of that Spirit and life wherein it first came forth (and wherein it first stood), and consisted in doctrines of men, and a form of worship and knowledge which the wisdom of man had framed, in an imitation of that which formerly stood in the life.

And now men being gone from the life, from the Spirit, and his immediate teachings, into an outward form of knowledge and worship of God in the wrong nature, antichrist is got up, and the dragon sits in the temple, appearing there as if he were God, giving out laws and ordinances of worship in public, and putting men upon duties and exercises of devotion in private, and he is obeyed and bowed down to in the observation of these; but the true, living God is not known, nor his secret, still voice which calls out of these heard; because of the great noise which the dragon makes in his temple (for so it is now, he having gained it, though it was once God's), about his laws and ordinances of worship, which he would have all compelled to, and none suffered to testify against them that they are his, and not the Lord's.

Yet it pleased the Lord, all the night of this darkness, to raise up some witnesses against the dragon, and all his invented forms of worship; though they were still hunted, persecuted, knocked down, and their testimony cried out against, as error, heresy, schism, and blasphemy; and the ways, worships, and ordinances of the whore, the beast, and dragon, still cried up as the truth. Thus the Papists cried

out against the Protestants as heretics and schismatics, who were witnesses against them; and the Protestants cried out against the Non-conformists, Separatists, and Brownists, who were witnesses against them; and every sect cries out most against them who are led further from the apostasy, and raised up by the Lord, as witnesses against them, against their sitting down in their forms, and not pursuing the guidance of that Spirit, which would lead them quite out of the darkness, and not have them sit down by the way.

Now the Lord God, in these latter days, hath not only raised up witnesses against the whore, the dragon, the beast, the false prophets, with all their inventions which they have set up instead of the truth; but hath assayed, and begun to deliver his people out of this Egyptian darkness, and to bring them back to the light of the land of Canaan. And now great enemies have appeared; the sons of the night exceedingly strengthening themselves to keep out the daylight, every one crying up his own form, and all joining hand in hand against the power: yea, and that spirit which first tempted from God is exceeding busy to cause those whom the Spirit of the Lord hath been drawing out of the land of darkness, to make a captain to return to Egypt; or at least to sit down in some form, or some pleasant notion of things by the way, and not to follow the Lord through all his intricate leadings in the vast, howling wilderness, till he bring them into the possession of the true rest. What a work was there to quench that spirit which stirred in the Protestants against Popery, and to fix them in Episcopacy, and in the use of the common prayer-book! When that was detected, and turned from, the Presbytery endeavored to take its place, and to bring in its directory; but the pursuit of the Lord was so hot against that, that it sunk presently, and his mighty hand would not suffer it so much as to arise. Much about the same time Independency and Anabaptism appeared and contended; and there was a more simple and honest thing stirring there, than in the other: and accordingly the blessing of the Lord (which was not to the form, but to the life which was stirring within) did ap-

pear more among them. But they fixing there, lost the life and simplicity to which the blessing was, and met with the death and the curse, which is the proper reward of the form: for any form, out of the life, kills the life; and its reward is death to itself. The form kills the life, which stirred underneath, and made it appear with some freshness; and when the life, from which it had its seeming beauty and lustre, dies, then it soon withers and dies also: so that the living principle being once slain, there remains nothing but the dead spirit, feeding on the dead form. There was one more pure appearance, and nearer to the kingdom than all these: which was of seeking and waiting: but death overcame this also, making a form of it, and stealing in some observations, from the letter of the Scriptures, concerning the kingdom, whereby their eyes were withheld from beholding the inward principle and seed of life within, to look for some great appearance of power without (such as was among the apostles), to set things to rights; and so they were held captive by the same spirit, in their seeking and waiting, whereby the others are held in their forms. Thus have persons generally missed the following of that good Spirit, which began to lead them out of Egypt, the dark land; and losing their guide, have fixed some where or other by the way; resting in some form, or in some notion or expectation of things (according as in their wisdom they have imagined from their skill in the letter), short of the life itself. Thus have their carcasses fallen in the wilderness.

Now this I have to say to you all: all you who rest in any form whatsoever, or rest in any notion or apprehension of things short of the life itself, ye had even as good have stayed in Egypt, as to fix by the way, and to take up a rest in the wilderness, short of Canaan. In plain terms, ye had as good have abode in Popery or Episcopacy; ye had been as acceptable to God there as here. Not that I say your forms of Independency, Anabaptism, or Seeking, are as bad as Popery, Episcopacy, or Presbytery: nay; they are all somewhat nearer, and the last of them very much nearer: but your fixing there, and the dead spirit feeding there on

the dead thing, is as remote from life as if it had gone quite back again. And this dead spirit is as hateful to God here, as it is among the Papists; yea, and in one sense more, because it makes a pretence beyond them.

And the truth is, ye have gone back again, though not in the direct form, yet into that very spirit wherein Popery's strength and kingdom lie; and so are become one of the beast's names; and your strength and defence lie in the beast's horns, either in the outward powers of the earth, or in that inward knowledge of things and wisdom from the letter, which is out of the life, and so are not yet come out of the city of Babylon. For mark: the spirit that fixeth in a form short of the life, is the same that whored from the life: and the same spirit is the whore still, in what form soever she be. The Spirit that rose up in the life, against the death and corruption whereof Popery wholly consisted, was a good Spirit; and this Spirit would pass through all forms, till it meet with the life. It is the other spirit that says to thee, Thou hast gone far enough; and so tempts thee to stay by the way. And he who hearkens to this spirit, and stays any where by the way, is caught with the old whore in a new dress, and is drinking the cup of fornication afresh. And then, like the Papists, he runs to the powers of the earth, to defend his form against the witnesses of God (and that is his cover under which he persecutes, and there he lies hid), or at least to his own wisdom and reason, to strengthen himself with arguments for fixing here, and against going any further. And then he grows wise in the flesh, and cries against them who are still led by the same Spirit to press on further, as weak, silly, giddy, unsettled, seduced people, that can never know when they are well. Thus the wise Episcopalians reviled the simple-hearted Non-conformists, who pursued further than they. And the Non-conformists, when they lost their simplicity, and began to stick, reviled those that pursued beyond them. And thus at this day, those who are pressing on in the Spirit, are disdained by those who have taken up their station in

the flesh; and with their two great horns of earthly power and earthly wisdom, are they pushing at them.

Look about ye, look about ye, all sorts of devout professors; see where ye are! Are you not dead in your forms? Is not the good old Puritan principle (wherein once was true life in its measure) dead and buried there? Consider with yourselves; hath that grown in your forms? Or hath it been slain there? Speak the truth in your own hearts; can ye truly say, from a sensible feeling in the life, that that principle is still alive in you? If it were so, ye could never be drawn to persecute, no, nor suffer persecution, ye that have power to hinder it: but if that seed be choked, then ye may well connive at, if not further the enemy, and plead for him, and join interests with him. While Abel lived in you, Cain could not rise up in his dominion; but now the right seed is slain, the murdering nature appears.

Oh hasten out of this spirit! Hasten out of Babylon! Cast off the spirit of Popery: return to the old Puritan principle: do not cry it up in deceit, to oppose the present appearance of truth, which is grown up further in it; but subject that dead, formal, earthly spirit to it, which is fallen beneath it. And when ye are come to a true touch of life there, ye may be able to own the same truth in its growth to a further measure. But while thou art in the dead understanding, and from the power and life of truth in thine own particular, dost thou think to be able to measure truth aright in others? Nay; thou measurest by a false appearance of things in the fallen understanding, and in the wisdom which thou hast gathered there, since thou thyself fellest from the living principle: and this must needs commend that most which is nearest to it, and not that which is nearest to truth. And this is the great error of this age; men, with a gathered knowledge from scripture words, without the true faith and life, go about to measure that life and knowledge which come from the faith; and because it suits not with the apprehensions which they have taken into their minds, they condemn it. And thus, being in the stumbling wisdom, and way of observation to which truth was never revealed,

but was ever an offence, they stumbled at it: and so men generally dash and split themselves against the same rock now, as the Pharisees did of old. Now this understanding must perish, and this wisdom in men be brought to nought, before that can be raised up which can judge aright.

Hearken therefore to my exhortation, as ye love your souls; Come out of Popery in deed and in truth: come out of the SPIRIT of Popery: burn the whore, in her new forms as well as in her old: cast off all these new names of the beast, under which the old spirit has made a prey of the life in your own particulars, and lies lurking to make a prey of the life in others, and to force it into its own deceitful forms of death, and slay it. Leave defending your faith and church by the beast's horns, and come to that faith and church which is received, gathered, and defended by Christ, the *One Horn of Salvation.* Leave your reasonings and disputings in that wisdom which has slain the life, and come to that wisdom which comes from the life, and springs up in the life; and ye will find more certainty and satisfaction in one touch of true life, than in all the reasonings and disputes of wise men to the world's end. The ground wherein men's religion grows (even the most zealous) is bad; even the same ground wherein the Pharisees' religion stood and grew; and it hath brought forth such a kind of fruit; namely, such a kind of conformity to the letter as theirs was; which stands in the understanding and will of man, rearing up a pleasant building there, but keeps from the life, and from building in it. But the true religion stands in receiving a principle of life; which, by its growth, forms a vessel for itself; and all the former part, wherein sin on the one hand, or self-righteousness on the other hand, stood and grew, passeth away.

These things following strike at the king of Babylon himself; yea, even at the very root of the antichristian spirit in every man; which he that can mildly receive the stroke of, may feel the true Spirit of life (which lies underneath) spring up in him, and give life to his soul: which, when it is delivered, will be able truly to know, and rejoice in the

Lord his Saviour. And when the root of that spirit is cut down (which never brought forth sweet, pleasant fruit unto life; but only sour fruit, finely painted and dressed for the eye and palate of death), its body, branches, leaves, and fruit will wither and die daily, and truth come to grow safely.

THE

AXE LAID TO THE ROOT

OF THE

OLD CORRUPT TREE.

A DISTINCTION between the FAITH which is of MAN, and the FAITH which is of GOD: One whereof is the Faith of Sion, the other the Faith of Babylon: The one laying hold on Christ, as he is revealed the King of Life in Sion; the other lays hold on a Historical Relation of Christ, the Fame whereof hath sounded in Babylon.

THERE is a faith which is of a man's self; and a faith which is the gift of God: or a power of believing, which is found in the nature of fallen man; and a power of believing, which is given from above. As there are two births, the first and the second, so they have each their faith; and each believes with his faith, and seems to lay hold on the same thing for life; and the contention about the inheritance will not be ended, till God determine it. Cain will sacrifice with his faith, and he believes he shall be accepted: if he had not believed so, he would not have been so angry when he found it otherwise: and the Cainish spirit in man, the vagabond from the life of God, which hath not a habitation in God, nor the eternal life of God abiding in him, is busy with the same faith at this day, and hath the same expectation from it as Cain had.

This is the root of the false religion; of the false hope; of the false peace; of the false joy; of the false rest; of the false comfort; of the false assurance; as the other is of the true. In this faith, which is of man, and in the improvement of it, stands all the knowledge, zeal, devotion, and worship of the world in general, and of the worldly part in every man in particular: but the true knowledge, the true zeal, the true devotion, the true worship, stand in the faith which is given of God, to them that are born of the immortal seed; which lives in God, and in which God liveth for ever.

Now it deeply concerns every man, to consider from which of these his knowledge, religion, and worship proceed, and in which of them they stand. For if they proceed from, and stand in, the faith which is of man, they cannot please God, nor conduce to the salvation of the soul. But though they may taste very pleasantly to man's palate now, and administer much hope and satisfaction to him at present, yet they will fail at the time of need; for, as Christ said concerning the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, so may I concerning this faith; *Except your faith, with the works of it, exceeds that faith, and all the works of it* (even to the uttermost improvement thereof) *which is to be found in man's nature, it will never lead you to the kingdom of God, nor be able to give you any right to the inheritance of life.* For he that will inherit, must be the right heir, must have the faith of Abraham, the faith of Isaac; which springs up from the root of life in the seed; and this leads the seed into that spring of life (out of which it shot forth as a branch) which is the inheritance promised to the seed. And here is Christ, Alpha and Omega, in every particular soul where life is begun and perfected, running its course through time, back to that which was before the beginning.

Therefore observe, and consider well, what this faith which is of man's self can do; and how far it may go in the changing of man, and in producing a conformity of him to the letter of the Scriptures. And then consider where it is shut out, what it cannot do, what change it cannot make,

what it cannot conform to: that so the true distinction may be let into the mind, and not a foundation laid of so great a mistake in a matter of so great concernment.

1. A man may believe the history of the Scriptures; yea, and all the doctrines of them, so far as he can reach them with his understanding, with this faith which is of man. As by this faith a man can believe a history probably related to him; so by this faith he believes the histories of the Scriptures, which are more than probably related. As by this faith a man can receive doctrines of instruction out of philosophers' books; so by the same faith he may receive doctrines of instruction out of the Scriptures. Reading a relation of the fall of man, of the recovery by Christ, that there is no other way to life, &c., this faith can believe the relation of these things, as well as it can believe the relation of other things.

2. This being believed from the relation of the history of these things, it naturally sets all the powers of man at work (kindling the understanding, will, and affections,) towards the avoiding of misery, and the attaining of happiness. What would not a man do to avoid perpetual extremity of misery on soul and body for ever, and to obtain a crown of everlasting blessedness? This boils the affections to an height, and sets the understanding on work to the utmost, to gather all the rules of scripture, and to practise all the duties and ordinances therein mentioned. What can the Scriptures propose to be believed, that he will not believe? What can it propose to be done, that he will not do? Must he pray? He will pray. Must he hear? He will hear. Must he read? He will read. Must he meditate? He will meditate. Must he deny himself, and all his own righteousness and duties, and hope only for salvation in the merits of Christ? He will seem to do that too; and say, when he has done all he can, he is but an unprofitable servant. Does the scripture say he can do nothing without the Spirit? He will acknowledge that too, and hope he has the Spirit. God hath promised the Spirit to them that ask it; and he has asked long, and asks still, and therefore hopes he has it.

Thus man, by a natural faith, grows up and spreads into a great tree, and is very confident and much pleased; not perceiving the defect in his root, and what all his growth here will come to.

3. This being done with much seriousness and industry, there must needs follow a great change in man: his understanding will be more and more enlightened; his will more and more conformed to that to which he thus gives himself up, and to which he thus bends himself with all his strength; his affections more and more weaned; he will find a kind of life and growth in this, according to its kind. Let a man's heart be in any kind of study or knowledge, applying himself strictly to it, he gathers understanding in his mind, and warmth in his affection: so it is also here. Yea, this being more excellent in itself, must needs produce a more excellent understanding, and a more excellent warmth, and have a greater power and influence upon the will.

4. Now, how easy is it for a man to mistake here, and call this the truth! First, he mistakes this for the true faith; and then he mistakes in applying to this all that which belongs to the true faith: and thus entering into the spirit of error at first, he errs in the whole course of his religion, from the beginning to the end. He sees a change made by this in him; and this he accounts the true conversion and regeneration. This leads him to ask, and seek, and pray; and this he accounts the true praying, the true seeking, the true asking. This cleanseth (after its kind) his understanding, will, and affections; and this he takes for the true sanctification. The justification which is to the true believer, he also applies to this faith; and so he has a peace, a satisfaction, a rest here, and a hope of happiness hereafter. Thus he receives what is already revealed; and he waits for what may be further revealed, which he can embrace and conform to, turning still upon this centre, and growing up from this root. And he that does not come hither in religion, falls short of the improvement of man's nature, and of the faith that grows there (which naturally leads all the powers of nature hither, and fixes them here), which is but dead.

And now this man is safe; he is a believer; he is a worshipper of God; he is a Christian; he is an observer of the commands of Christ: when the overflowing scourge comes, it shall not touch him: all the judgments, plagues, threatenings, in the Scriptures, belong not to him, but to the unbelievers; to them that know not God; to them that worship not God; to them that observe not the commands of Christ. Thus, by his untempered mortar from his false faith, he has built up a wall against the deluge of wrath; which wall will tumble down upon him when the wrath comes. The growth of this faith, and great spreading of it into all this knowledge, zeal, and devotion, hath not changed the nature of it all this while; but it is the same that it was at the beginning, even a power of nature in the first birth; and all these fruits are but the fruits of the first nature, which is still alive under all this. All this can never kill the principle out of which it grows; but feeds it more, and fattens it for the slaughter.

Thus far this faith can go: but then there is somewhat it is shut out of at the very first: there is somewhat this faith cannot receive, believe, or enter into. What is that? It is the life, the power, the inward part of this. Though it may seem to have unity with all the scriptures in the letter; yet it cannot have unity with one scripture in the life: for its nature is shut out of the nature of the things there witnessed. As for instance: it may have a literal knowledge of Christ, according as the scripture relates; of his birth, preaching, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, &c. Yea, but the thing spoken of it knoweth not. The nature of Christ (which is the Christ) is hidden from that eye. So it may have a literal knowledge of the blood of Christ, and of justification; but the life of the blood which livingly justifieth, that birth cannot feel; but can only talk of it, according to the relation it reads in the scripture. So it may have a literal knowledge of sanctification; but the thing that sanctifieth, it cannot receive into itself. So for redemption, peace, joy, hope, love, &c., it may get into the outward part of all these; but the inward part,

the life, the spirit of them, it is shut out of, and cannot touch or come near; nor can it witness that change which is felt and known here. And here is the great contention in the world between these two births; the one contending for its knowledge in the letter, and the other contending for its knowledge in the life: the one setting up its faith from the natural part, calling it spiritual; and the other, which has felt the stroke of God upon this (and thereby come to know the difference), setting up the faith of the true heir: which faith hath a different beginning, and a different growth from the other, and will be welcomed into the land and kingdom of life; when the other will be manifested to be but the birth of the bond-woman, and be thrust forth with its mother to seek their bread abroad: for the seed of the bond-woman is not to inherit with Isaac, the seed of promise.

Quest. *What then is that faith which is the gift of God? And which is distinct from this?*

Ans. It is that power of believing which springs out of the seed of eternal life; and leavens the heart, not with notions of knowledge, but with the powers of life. The other faith is drawn out of man's nature, by considerations which affect the natural part, and is kept alive by natural exercises of reading, hearing, praying, studying, meditating in that part; but this springs out of a seed of life given, and grows up in the life of that seed, and feeds on nothing but the flesh and blood of Christ; in which is the living virtue, and immortal nourishment of that which is immortal. This faith, at its first entrance, strikes that part dead in which the other faith did grow, and by its growth perfects that death, and raiseth up a life which is of another nature than ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. And by the death of this part in us, we come to know and enjoy life; and by the life we have received, know, and enjoy, we come to see that which other men call life (and which we ourselves were apt to call life formerly) to be but death. And from this true knowledge, we give a true testimony to the world of what we have seen and felt; but no man re-

ceiveth our testimony. It grieves us to the heart to see men set up a perishing thing as the way to life; and our bowels are exceedingly kindled, when we behold an honest zeal and simplicity betrayed; and in tender love do we warn men of the pit, into which they are generally running so fast; though men reward us with hatred for our good will, and become our bitter enemies because we tell them the truth, and the most necessary truth for them to know; which they can bear neither in plain words, nor yet in parables. Yet be not rough and angry; but meekly wait to read this following parable aright, and it will open into life. The parable is briefly this:

That which sold the birth-right, seeks the birth-right with tears and great pains; but shall never recover it. But there is one which lies dead, which hath the promise, which stirs not, which seeks not till he is raised by the power of the Father's life, and then he wrestles with the Father, prevails, and gets the blessing from him. Therefore know that part which is up first, and is so busy in the willing and in the running, and makes such a noise about duties, and ordinances, and graces, to keep down the life which it hath slain: and know that seed of life which is the heir, which lies underneath all this, and must remain slain while this lives: but if ever ye hear the voice of the Son of God, this will live, and the other die. And happy for ever will he be who knows this! But misery will be his portion, who cannot witness a thorough change by the almighty power of the living God, but hath only painted the old nature and sepulchre, but never knew the old bottle broken, and a new one formed, which alone is able to receive and retain the new wine of the kingdom; whereas the other, Pharisee-like, can only receive a relation of the letter concerning the kingdom.

SOME ASSERTIONS

Concerning FAITH, its Nature, Rise, &c., with its Receiving of CHRIST, and what follows thereupon; namely, a Growing in his living Virtue; with a Knowledge of the true, living, unerring Rule, and Obedience to it in the Life.

ASSERTION I.

THAT *the true faith* (the faith of the gospel, the faith of the elect, the faith which saves the sinner from sin, and makes him more than a conqueror over sin and the powers of darkness) *is a belief in the nature of God;* which belief giveth entrance into, fixeth in and causeth an abiding in that nature. Unbelief entereth into death, and fixeth in the death: faith giveth entrance into, and fixeth in the life. Faith is an ingrafting into the vine, a partaking of the nature of the vine, a sucking of the juice of life from the vine; which nothing is able to do but the faith, but the belief in the nature. And nothing can believe in the nature, but what is one with the nature. So then faith is not a believing the history of the scripture, or a believing and applying the promises, or a believing that Christ died for sinners in general, or for me in particular; for all this may be done by the unbelieving nature (like the Jew); but a uniting to the nature of God in Christ, which the unbeliever starts from, in the midst of his believing of these. Yet I do not deny that all these things are to be believed, and are believed with the true faith: but this I affirm, that they also may be believed without the true faith; and that such a belief of these doth not determine a man to be a believer in the sight of God, but only the union with the nature of that life from whence all these sprang, and in which alone they have their true value.

II.

That the true faith springs from the true knowledge, or comes with the true knowledge of the true nature of God in Christ, which it believes in. He can never believe in the nature of God, who hath not first the nature of God revealed to him. If a man search the Scriptures all his days, hear all that can be said by men concerning God, Christ, faith, justification, &c., be able to dispute about them, and think he can make his tenets good against all the world; yet, if he hath not received the true knowledge of the nature of these things, all his professed faith in them cannot be true.

III.

That the true knowledge is only to be had by the immediate revelation of Christ in the soul. No man knows the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals him. The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. There is no raising of a dead soul to life, but by the immediate voice of Christ. Outward preaching, reading the Scriptures, &c. may direct and encourage men to hearken after and wait for the voice; but it is the immediate voice of Christ in the soul, which alone can quicken the soul to God: and till the light of life shine immediately from Christ in the heart, the true knowledge is never given. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Therefore they that never yet heard the immediate voice of Christ, are still dead in their sins, and have not yet received the true, living knowledge, but a dead, literal knowledge, which gives a false shining of things in the dead part, but kills the life. Indeed the proper use of all means, is to bring to the immediate voice, life, and power; and till this be done, till the soul come to that, to hear that, to feel that, to be rooted there, there is nothing done that will stand; but men stick by the way, crying up the means, and never knowing, tasting, or enjoying the thing which the means point to. But he that knows God comes into the immediate presence; and he that daily lives in God, lives in the immediate life; and the true faith leads to this, giving the

soul such a touch and taste of it at first, as makes unsatisfiable without it. By this Christ cuts off the Jews, with all their zeal and knowledge. John v. 37, 38. "Ye have not heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape; and ye have not his word abiding in you." There is the hearing of the voice, the sight of the shape, and the having the word of God abiding in the heart, which gives both the hearing of the voice, and the sight of the shape, and keeps the soul quick, and living in the life. The voice gives life, the sight of the shape daily conforms into the image, which is beheld by the eye of life; and the word abiding in the heart nourishes and feeds the living soul with the pure bread of life. But the Jews knew not this; but were crying up their sabbaths, the law of Moses, the ordinances of Moses, the temple of God, the instituted worship of God, and so were shut out of the thing itself which those things ended in, and out of a capacity of receiving it. And thus many zealous ones at this day, not having come to this, no more than the Jews did, but sticking in the letter of the gospel, as the Jews did in the letter of the law, stumble at the present dispensation of life, and cannot do otherwise.

IV.

That Christ's immediate revelation of the nature of his Father is to his babes. Not to the wise, not to the zealous, not to the studious, not to the devout, not to the rich in the knowledge of the Scriptures without: but to the weak, the foolish, the poor, the lowly in heart. And man receives not these revelations by study, by reading, by willing, by running, but by being formed in the will of life, by being begotten of the will of the Father, and by coming forth in the will, and lying still in the will, and growing up in the will, here the child receives the wisdom which is from above, and daily learns that cross which crucifies the other wisdom, which joins with and pleases the other will, which loves to be feeding on the shadowy and husky part of knowledge, without life. Therefore, if ever thou desire to receive this knowledge from Christ, know that eye in thyself that is to be blinded,

which Christ will never reveal the Father to: read at home, know the wise and prudent there, whom Christ excludes from the living knowledge. And if thou canst bear it, that eye that can read the Scriptures with the light of its own understanding; that can consider and debate, and take up senses and meanings of it, without the immediate life and power; that is the eye that may gather what it can from the letter, but shall never see into the life, nor taste of the true knowledge; for Christ, who alone opens and gives the knowledge, hides the pearl from that eye.

The true knowledge is only poured into the new vessel. It is the living soul alone that receives the living knowledge of the living God from Christ the life. The old nature, the old understanding, is for death and destruction. The wisdom of the flesh, though painted ever so like the spiritual wisdom, is not to be spared anywhere; but that wisdom, with all its zeal and growth and progress in religion must perish. All men's knowledge of the Scriptures which they have gathered in that part will profit them nothing, but hinder them. Every building which the leprosy of sin hath overspread, is to be pulled down; therefore he that hath only the old house swept and garnished, never received the true knowledge, from whence the true faith springs, but his life lies in the oldness of the letter, in the conformity of the dead part to that, and he knows not the virtue of the knowledge of God in the newness of the Spirit (the veil being over his heart) which is only given to the new understanding.

V.

That this faith (which springs from the true knowledge) *is God's gift*, and is not that power of believing which is to be found in man's nature; but of another nature, even the nature of the giver. And when man is called to believe, he is not called to put forth that faith wherewith he believeth other things; but to receive and exercise the gift of faith, which is from above. That which is to be believed in is spiritual; and that must be spiritual which believes in it. Man, with all the powers of his nature, is shut out; it is

another thing, distinct from man, which is let into life, and which lets man in. For man receiving the faith, entering into the faith, and becoming new-formed in the faith, then he also may enter; but till then he is shut out, and knoweth not the life, let him believe and read and pray and hear and exercise himself in that which he calls duties and ordinances ever so much; for all these, set up in the wrong part in man, only feed the wrong part; and that, with all its food and nourishment, falls short of the life. Therefore the true entrance into religion is to feel that power which slays man's natural ability and propensity to believe, that so the gift of the true faith may be received: for there is no rising up and living of the second, without the death of the first, with all its natural faculties and powers.

VI.

That by this faith alone, which is the gift which is from above, (and not that faith which grows either in the wilderness or garden of the old nature, and is fed by the oldness of the letter, and not by the newness of the Spirit) *is Christ received.* For Christ can be received by the faith alone that comes from him; and that faith which comes from him cannot but receive him. Man's faith refuseth him; it receiveth a literal knowledge of him from what it heareth from men, or from what it readeth related in the Scripture concerning him; but refuseth the nature of the thing. And it cannot be otherwise; for man's faith, not being of the nature of it, cannot but refuse it. But this faith, which is given of God, which is from above, being of the same life and nature with Christ, cannot refuse the spring of its own life; but receiveth him immediately. There is no distance of time; but so soon as faith is received, Christ is received, and the soul united to him in the faith. As unbelief immediately shuts him out, so faith lets him in immediately, and centres the soul in him: and the immortal soul feels the immortal virtue, and rejoices in the proper spring of its own immortal nature. But the faith of man never reaches this, never receives Christ, but only a relation of things concerning him;

and with that faith which stands in the letter, opposes that faith which stands in the life. And here is the spirit of antichrist; here is the mystery of iniquity, working out of one form into another: for antichrist does not directly deny Christ, or deny the letter; but cries up Christ, cries up the letter, cries up ordinances; but so as they may feed the faith of his own nature, and maintain a hope there. And thus the spirit of man is at unity with what will feed his own, with what interpretations his own understanding can gather out of the Scriptures. And thus can he cry up Christ, and say he hopes to be saved by him, while the spirit of enmity against the nature of Christ lodgeth in his heart. This is antichrist, wherever he is found; and this is his faith, and great is his knowledge, and many are his coverings; but the Lord is searching him out, who will strip him, and make his nakedness appear.

VII.

That Christ is received as a grain of mustard-seed. Christ is such a thing, as every eye, but the eye of this faith, despiseth. He is the stone which the wisdom of the builders, in all ages, hath rejected. They look for a glorious Messiah; but they know him not in his humiliation, in the little seed, out of which he is to grow up into his glory: and so missing of the thing, they build up only with high imaginations in the airy mind concerning it. As when God sent Christ in the flesh, there was no form nor beauty in him; the Jews, whose hope and expectation lay there, yet saw no manner of comeliness, no desirableness in him; even so it is now: when God comes to offer him to those that think they place all their hopes in him, they see no loveliness in him, but refuse him daily. What! this little thing, small, like a grain of mustard-seed, can this be the glorious Christ which the Scriptures have spoken so much of? Why, we know the descent of this (its father, mother, and kindred are with us), we find this in our nature. Thus, like the Jews of old, they make a great noise about Christ, but refuse the thing itself. And this for want of the true eye of faith: for if they had

that eye, they would see the virtue in the little seed, and receive him in his humiliation in their hearts, where he knocks daily for entrance, and be content till this grain of mustard-seed grew up into a great and glorious tree. But for want of this eye, they keep him out, and let in the painted murderer, who dwells in them, and covers himself with a knowledge, a zeal, a faith, and hope, &c., in the old nature, in the old vessel, in the old understanding: and thus they give God and Christ good words, while the evil spirit has their heart, and dwells there, bringing forth his own old evil fruit under an appearance of devotion and holiness.

Hear now, ye wise in the letter, but strangers to the life! there is a twofold appearance of Christ in the heart; there is an appearance of him as a servant to obey the law, to fulfill the will of the Father in that body which the Father prepares there for him: and there is an appearance of him in glory, to reign in the life and power of the Father: and he that knows not the first of these in his heart, shall never know the second there. And he that knows not these inwardly, shall never know any outward, visible coming to his comfort. For if Christ should come outwardly to reign (as many expect), yet to be sure he would not reign in thee, whose heart he hath not first entered into and subdued to himself; which is only to be done by his appearance there, first as a servant, then as a king. But what estate are Christians (so called) now in, who know not him in them who is able to serve the Lord; but are striving and fighting in that nature where sin hath the power, and which can never overcome, being not in union with, but strangers to, that life and power which is the conqueror! Therefore let all consider in the depths of their hearts; for this is infallibly true: they that never received the seed of life in their hearts, never received Christ; and such shall never be free from sin while they live: for having not received the Son, who makes free, how can they be free indeed? Or be free from wrath when they are dead? For that faith concerning Christ will not save them hereafter, which did not bring them to receive Christ here.

VIII.

That this seed being received, groweth up into its own form; or is formed in that creature into which it is received. It there groweth up into the body in which it is to serve the Lord, and which body is to be glorified when it has finished its service. As a seed cast into fitted earth, or the seed of man or beast sown in a fitting womb, receiveth form and groweth into a plant, or living creature; so it is with this seed in its earth. Open the true eye, O ye Christians! and begin to read the mystery of godliness.

IX.

That this creature, or the Spirit of life in this creature (which it is in union with, and which is never separated from it) *is the Christian's rule.* Gal. vi. 15, 16. 1 John ii. 27. Heb. viii. 10, 12. The Son is never without the Spirit of the Father; no, not in the seed; and the Spirit of the Father is the Son's rule. Outward rules were given to a state without; to men who were not brought to the life, but were exercised under shadows and representations of the life: but the Son, who is within, who is the substance of all, who is the life, who is one with the Father, whose proper right the Spirit is, he is not tied to any outward rule; but is to live and walk in the immediate light of the Spirit of his own life. And he that hath the Son, hath this rule; and he that hath not this rule, hath not the Son: and he that hath not the Son, hath not the true faith (which immediately receives him) and so is no Christian; but hath stolen the name from the letter, having never received the nature from the Spirit, to which alone the name belongs.

X.

He that hath Christ, or the seed of eternal life, which is Christ, *formed in him (which seed the Spirit always dwells in, and never is absent from, which is the same Spirit which gave forth the Scriptures), he is in a capacity of understanding those scriptures which that Spirit gave forth, as that Spirit leads him*

into the understanding of them. But he that hath not received that which is like the grain of mustard-seed, and so hath not Christ nor his spirit (whatever he may pretend to), he, by all his studies, arts, languages, reading of expositors, conferences, nay, experiences, can never come to the true knowledge of the Scriptures; for he wants the true key, which alone can open. He may have got a great many wrong keys, none of which can open; but he wants the true key of the true knowledge, and so is shut out of that; and only let into such a kind of knowledge as the wrong key can open into. And with this kind of knowledge the merchants of Babylon have long traded; but their day is expiring apace, and their night of lamentation and howling hasteneth.

XI

Though he can understand the Scriptures, as the Spirit leads him into the knowledge of them, and can set his seal to the truth of them, yet he cannot call them his rule: for, having received the life for his rule, and knowing it to be so, he cannot call another thing it. He that hath received the new covenant into his heart, with the laws of the life thereof written there by the Spirit of life, who doth write them there, even in the least of all that believe, as well as in the greatest, he knoweth that this living writing is his rule. The Scriptures give relation where the covenant and law of life is written; and if I will read it, thither must I go, whither the Scriptures point me. I must go to Christ the book of life, and read there with that eye which Christ gives, if I read the things of life. And the Scriptures are willing to surrender up their glory to Christ, who was before them, and is above them, and shall be after them. But there is a false spirit, which hath seated itself in a literal knowledge of the Scriptures, and hath formed images and likenesses of truth from it (every one after the imaginations of his own heart); and all these fall, if Christ the life appear: and so this spirit cries up the Scriptures now in a way of deceit, just as the Jews cried up Moses. It was a good remove, to withdraw the ear

from the false church, and to listen to the true testimony which the Scriptures give of Christ: but it is the seducing spirit which tempts to stick by the way, and to rear up buildings and forms of knowledge from the letter of the Scriptures, and not come to feel after, unite with, and live in, Christ the life. And unless ye come to this, your reading of the Scripture is vain, and all your gathering rules of practice, and comforts from promises, will end in vanity: for until ye know, and have received the thing itself, ye are at a distance from that to which all belongs. A lively and glorious testimony of truth hath God held forth in this age, at which all that stick in the letter cannot but stumble; and there is no possibility of knowing or receiving it, but by feeling the true touch of the inward life of it. "Wisdom is justified of her children:" but they that are not born of her, cannot justify her womb or birth.

To the Jews, who were an outward people, there was an outward rule given, a law of commandments, statutes, judgments, and ordinances, proper to that state wherein they were, and to that thing to which the ministry was: but all this was to be done away, and to end in that which all this represented. So that to Christians, Christ the substance being come, which is the end of all these shadows, the true Jew being raised in the immediate life, now there is a necessity for the immediate life for the rule. To them under the gospel, to them who are come to the substance, to them who are begotten and born in the life, there can be no rule proportionable to their state, but Christ the substance, Christ the life. Here he alone is the light, the way, the truth, the rule; the Spirit is here the rule, the new creature is the rule, the new covenant the rule; all which are in unity together, and he that hath one of them hath them all, and he that hath not them all hath none of them. So that directions taken out of the scripture cannot be the rule to him who is the true Christian; but the measure of grace, the measure of the light, the measure of the Spirit, the measure of the gift received into the living soul from the spring of life, this

is the alone rule of life. But Christians in the degeneration have lost this, and so have taken up words for a rule (which were not given to that end); and so with deductions by the earthly part, they feed the earthly part. What is fed by men's scripture knowledge, but the earthly understanding? The earthly will heated; the earthly affections warmed? And of the fruits of this earth they bring sacrifices to God: and they are angry that God hath raised up Abel, their younger brother, who offers up the Lamb of God to God, and serves the living God, in his own living Spirit, and with the faith which comes from him. Abel's religion stands not in that part wherein all other men's religion stands, but in the death of that part; and in the raising up of another part, wherein life springs. Can ye mildly receive these gentle leadings? Do not provoke the tender heart of the Lamb against you, who also hath the voice of a lion, and can roar terribly out of his holy mountain against the enemies of his life and Spirit.

A NECESSARY WARNING,

And of very great Importance to all that call themselves CHRISTIANS, and hope for a Share in the Book of LIFE, and the escaping the Damnation of Hell; which is their Portion whose Names are written in the Book of Death, and blotted by God out of the Book of LIFE, though they hope to find them written there.

HEAR AND CONSIDER.

IT is recorded, Rev. xxii. 18, 19. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Great are the plagues that are written in this book, even

the pouring out of eternal wrath without mixture: torment day and night in the presence of the Lamb, &c. As the growth and fulness of the mystery of iniquity are spoken of in this book, so the measuring out of the fulness of wrath to it, is spoken of also. And great are the life and blessedness that are here promised to those that fight with and overcome the mystery of iniquity: and receive not any marks or names of the beast, nor are subject to any of his horns, though he pull ever so hard with them. Now to meet with all the plagues here threatened, and to miss of all the blessedness here promised, is it not a sad state? Why, he that addeth to these things here spoken, or diminisheth from the words of this prophecy, the Lord hath said this shall befall him. Therefore, in the fear of that God who hath spoken this, and will make it good, let every one search, who is the adder, who is the diminisher.

Now mark, see if this be not a clear thing. He that giveth any other meaning of any scripture, than what is the true, proper meaning thereof, he both addeth and diminisheth; he taketh away the true sense, he addeth a sense that is not true. The Spirit of the Lord is the true expositor of scriptures; he never addeth nor diminisheth: but man, being without that Spirit, doth but guess, doth but imagine, doth but study and invent a meaning, and so he is ever adding or diminishing. This is the sense, saith one; this is the sense, saith another; this is the sense, saith a third; this, saith a fourth: another that is witty, and large in his comprehension, he says they will all stand: another, perhaps more witty than he, says none of them will stand, and he invents a meaning different from them all. And then, when they are thus expounding them, they will say, take the sense thus, it will yield this observation; or take it thus, and it will afford this observation. Doth not this plainly show, that he who thus saith, hath not the Spirit of the Lord to open the scripture to him, and manifest which is the true sense, but is working in the mystery of darkness? And yet this very person, who is thus working with his own dark spirit in the dark, will in words confess, that there is no true

understanding or opening of scripture, but by the Spirit of God. If it be so, how darest thou set thy imagination, thy fancy, thy reason, thy understanding on work, and so be guessing at that which the Spirit doth not open to thee, and so art found adding and diminishing?

Now he that is the adder, he that is the diminisher, he crieth out against the Spirit of the Lord, and chargeth him with adding and diminishing: for man being judge, he will judge his own way to be true, and God's to be false. That which is the adding and diminishing, he calls the true expounding of the place; but if the Spirit of the Lord immediately open any thing to any son or daughter, he cries, This is an adding to the word: the scripture is written; there are no more revelations to be expected now; the curse, saith he, is to them that add. Thus he removes the curse from his own spirit, and way of study and invention, to which it appertains; and casts it upon the Spirit of the Lord. And man cannot possibly avoid this in the way that he is in; for having first judged his own darkness to be light, then, in the next place, he must needs judge the true light to be darkness. He that hath afore-hand set up his own invented meaning of any scripture to be the true meaning, he must needs oppose the true meaning, and call it false, and so apply himself to form all the arguments he can out of other scriptures, to make it appear false. Thus man, having begun wrong in his knowledge of the Scriptures, stands engaged to make use of them against the Lord, and against his own soul; and yet really in himself thinks that he makes a right use of them, and that he serves the Lord, and that he is not opposing his truth, but opposing error and heresy; while he himself is in the error, and in the heresy, and against the truth; being a stranger to that Spirit, in whose immediate life and presence the truth grows.

Did the Lord, in these words, of forbidding to add or diminish upon so great a penalty, lay a restraint and limit upon his own Spirit, that it should no more hereafter speak in his sons and daughters; or did he intend to lay bounds

upon the unruly spirit of man? Did God leave man's spirit at liberty to invent and form meanings of his words, and bind up his own Spirit from speaking further words afterwards? When Moses said, thou shalt not add or diminish, was this to be any stop to the prophets, in whom God should speak afterwards? Is not this one of the subtle serpent's inventions, to keep up the esteem of man's invented meanings as the true sense, and to make a fortification against the entrance of that Spirit, which can discover all his false interpretations of the true words of God, and to make him see that he is the adder and the diminisher, and that his name will not be fonnd in the book of life, when the true light is held forth to read by?

But this is general, extending to all scriptures: my drift is more particularly concerning adding to the things, or diminishing from the words of the book of this prophecy.

There are two things chiefly spoken of in this book; Mystery Sion, Mystery Babylon; the true church, the false church; the Lamb's wife, the whore; the hiding of Mystery Sion, the appearing of Mystery Babylon in her place; the flying of the church out of her heaven into the wilderness, leaving all behind her which she could not carry with her; even all the ordinances and institutions of Christ, wherein once she appeared worshipping and serving God; and the starting of the false church into her place; taking up all that she had left, even all the ordinances and institutions of Christ in the letter; thus covering herself with the form of godliness, with the sheep's clothing, that she might pass the better for the true church: and the dragon who managed the war against the woman and her seed, raiseth up first one beast, and then another, and sets this whore on the top of them; who with the cup of fornication makes all the earth drunk, all nations, peoples, kindreds, tongues, languages. And the beast hath his horns everywhere; his marks everywhere; his names everywhere; and also his image in every part of Babylon. And who will not worship him, he fights with; yea, such as are led by God to rent from the whore, he calls schismatics, heretics, blasphemers, and

persecutes them as persons not worthy to live. Thus the state of things is quite changed, the power of truth lost, the form set up without it; those that seek after the power hated, persecuted, blasphemed; but those that lie still under any of the beast's forms, go for good Christians, for members of the visible church, so called by them.

Now mark: he that calls anything the church, but what this book calls the church, he adds: he that doth not know the wilderness, and own the church in the wilderness, he diminishes. The church of Rome is not the church in the wilderness; the church of Scotland is not the church in the wilderness; and the church of England is not the church in the wilderness; the several gathered churches are none of them the church in the wilderness: all these have sprung up since the church's flight, and have appeared in her absence, usurping her name, and appropriating it to themselves; but God, who gave it to the church, hath not given it to them; and so they must lose it again, when God brings back the church out of the wilderness. So he that calls those, which formerly were the institutions and ordinances of Christ, which the woman left behind her, and which the harlot hath got and attired herself with, which she now appears in, and wherewith the dragon is now worshipped, he adds to this book, which says the outward court was given to the Gentiles, and the true church had nothing left her but the inward temple, wherein alone the true worshippers worshipped; and they that worship elsewhere, are the false worshippers, worshipping in false temples, in temples of the whorish spirit's building; take it either outwardly or inwardly, for it holds true in both. He that makes the beast's names fewer than they are, or his marks fewer than they are, or his horns fewer than they are, or his image less than it is, he diminishes. And the danger hereof is not small; "For if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence

of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. xiv. 9, &c.

Now this I affirm: Whosoever has not the name of Sion, the mark of Sion, which he received of her in the wilderness, where the living God is with her, and where he is taught by God the laws of the wilderness-worship, and in some measure to testify against all the corrupted ordinances and institutions which have the beast's mark, and go now abroad in the world under the beast's name; I say, whoever has not the true mark of Sion, it is impossible for him to avoid the mark of Babylon. And he who avoids not the mark, cannot escape the plagues. But he that hath the mark of Sion, is, by a secret inward instinct of true life, led from the marks of Babylon; and (if he faithfully follow the guidance of it) from out of all the names, and from under all the horns.

It is not enough to be rent from Popery, and sit down under the power and government of the same spirit in another form; or to be rent from Episcopacy, and the same spirit sit down in Presbytery; or to be rent from Presbytery, and the same spirit sit down in a form of Independency, or Anabaptism; or to be rent from these, and the same spirit sit down in a way of seeking and waiting, and reading of words of scripture, and gathering things from thence without the life: but the true religion consists in knowing and following a true guide to the church in the wilderness, and thereto receive the mark, the living mark, which will preserve out of all invention, and further progress of the dead spirit.

Now therefore look about you; know the spirit of whoredom, and see how ye have been begotten in the adultery, and born of the whore, and have served the dragon, and worshipped his dead idols, and not the living God. And be not satisfied with changing of forms and dresses (which are but the several deceitful appearances of the whore), but put

off that spirit; lest when ye have hated the whore, and burnt her flesh as she appeared in one form, ye give yourselves up to her again, when she appears in another form: for the plagues are not so much to the form wherein the whore appears, as to the whorish spirit: and whosoever is found under her dominion, in any of her territories, under any of her forms, with that mark of hers upon them which belongs to that particular form, though ever so curiously painted, he shall drink of the unmixed cup of wrath.

Therefore tremble all sorts of people! pluck off your false coverings; see the shame of your nakedness, while it may be for your advantage so to do. The angel is gone forth, the corn is reaping and gathering into the garner, many lambs are brought into the fold of everlasting rest, Sion is redeeming, the true life is rising, the whorish spirit is judging, the door of life is yet open. Do not lie secure in the whore's wisdom! Do not lie slumbering, and reasoning, and disputing from the letter of the Scripture, till the gathering be finished, till the door be shut, till the eternal flames seize upon you, and ye find yourselves in the bosom of hell unawares, and see the children of the kingdom in Abraham's bosom, but yourselves shut out, and left to weep, and wail, and gnash your teeth.

Quest. *But how may I avoid adding to the things, and diminishing from the words, of this prophecy, and of other scriptures; that I may not meet with the weight of this curse, or miss of the blessing?*

Ans. Dost thou ask this question from thy heart, in the simplicity, out of the fleshly wisdom? Then hearken with that ear, and thou shalt set thy seal to mine answer.

1. Wait for the key of knowledge, which is God's free gift. Do not go with a false key to the Scriptures of Truth; for it will not open them. Man is too hasty to know the meaning of the Scriptures, and to enter into the things of God, and so he climbs up over the door with his own understanding; but he has not patience to wait to know the door, and to receive the key which opens and shuts the door; and by this means he gathers death out of words which came

from life. And this I dare positively affirm, that all that have gone this way to work have but a dead knowledge; and it is death in them that feeds upon this knowledge, and the life is not raised. Consider now the weight of this counsel in the true balance: there is no opening of the Scriptures but by the true key, nor is there any coming at the key till the Lord please to give it. What then is to be done, but only to wait (in the silence of that part which would be forward, and running before-hand) till the key be given, and to know how to receive it, as it is offered in the light; and not to wait in the will, or expect to receive it according to observations in the fleshly wisdom from the letter.

2. Let not thy understanding have the managing of this key, when it is given; but know the true opener, the skilful user of the key, the hand which can only turn the key aright; and let him have the managing both of his own key, and of thine understanding. Do not run in thine own understanding, or in thine own will, to search out the meaning of scripture; for then thou feedest with the scripture that which it is the intent of all words of life to destroy: but as thou waitedst for the key at first, so continually wait for the appearances and movings of the user of the key, and he will shut out thy understanding and will continually, which would still be running after the literal part of scriptures; and let thee into the life both of the prophecies and doctrines thereof. Man, when he hath received a true gift from God, he would be managing of it himself, and to be sure he will manage it for himself (for the gratifying and pleasing of himself, and not for God); and then God, being provoked, takes away the substance, and leaves him the shell. Therefore he that hath received a gift must be very watchful against that which would betray, or he may easily lose it: for though the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; yet if that lay hold of the gift which was not called, and to which it was not given, the Lord will thrust that by, and take away his gift from it.

3. Do not graft any of the fruit of the tree of life upon the tree of knowledge; for it will not grow there: an ap-

pearance, a likeness of the true fruit may grow there; but the true fruit itself will not. My meaning is, do not make a treasury of knowledge in the understanding part, which is to perish; but know the true treasury of all the things of life, which is in the life itself; and in that understanding which is formed, kept, and lives in the life. Lay no manna by to feed upon in the old store-house (lest the fleshly part should be running thither, when its fleshly appetite is kindled after food); but daily receive the continual bread from the hand of life. The wisdom of the life strikes at thy wisdom and understanding; and if ever thou wilt grow wise any more, thou losest this, and canst not possibly retain it: for that part is then getting up in thee, in which it cannot be held: but only a shadow, an image, a resemblance and likeness of it, which feeds and pleases that part which fain would have life, but cannot know it; and therefore is necessitated to make images and likenesses of things in heaven, or things in earth, that it might have somewhat.

4. Take not up a rest in openings of things, though by the true key. Take heed of overvaluing that kind of knowledge; for that part which overvalues that knowledge will presently be puffed up with it: but there is a more excellent and safer kind of knowledge to be pressed after, which is a knowledge of things by receiving of them. There is a knowledge of things by the Spirit's opening the words which speak of them, or by inward, immediate prophecies from the word of life in the heart. This is an excellent knowledge, and not to be found in the earthly part of man: yet the earthly part (when this knowledge is given) is very apt to be swelled and exalted with it; but then there is also a knowledge which ariseth from the gift of the thing itself. This knowledge is very precious, and much more full and certain than the other, having the nature and immediate power of life in itself, and so is perfectly able to preserve. As for instance, to make it more plain: there may be a knowledge of justification, by the Spirit's opening the words written in scripture concerning justification, and the blood of sprinkling; and this is a good knowledge, where there is

a true opening of it from the Spirit: but then there is a knowledge by feeling of the blood of sprinkling in the heart, and by seeing with the new eye the way of its justification; and in this knowledge is the power and the cleansing of the life received, which in the other was but spoken of. Therefore rest not in opening of prophecies, or true meanings of these things (though this kind of knowledge is very excellent, and hath been very rare), but wait to feel the thing itself which the words speak of, and to be united by the living Spirit to that, and then thou hast a knowledge from the nature of the thing itself; and this is more deep and inward than all the knowledge that can be had from words concerning the thing.

5. When thou feelest things, then seek their preservation in the proper spring of their own life. Let the root bear thee, and all thy knowledge, with all that is freely given thee of God. When thou feelest thyself leavened with the life, and become a branch shot out of the life, then learn how to abide in the life, and to keep all that is given thee there; and have nothing which thou mayest call thine own any more; but to be lost in thyself, and found in him. Know the land of the living, wherein all the things of life live, and can live nowhere else.

Now in all this, in this whole course, from the very first step of it, there is certainty, there is stability, there is infallibility. From the very first opening of the true key, I begin to learn somewhat of God; and to learn certainly, and feel an assurance and establishment in it: and growing up here, I grow up in the true learning, and in the true settlement, and so I am not unlearned and unstable, wresting the Scriptures to my own destruction: for I take none of the knowledge of the Scriptures from myself, from my own understanding, from my own study and invention, or from the studies of other expositors, but from a certain hand. And how can he wrest scripture, who is kept single, and has no desire to have any thing to be the meaning of it, but what is the meaning; nor no will to know the meaning, further than the good-will of him whose Spirit penned it

thinks good to give forth the meaning to him; and who waits to receive this, not to feed the lustful, knowing part in himself, but to feed the life with it? And when the life hath no use for it, he is content to have it shut up, and to be without it: I say, how is it possible for this man to wrest scriptures? But now a man that hath taken in a body of knowledge already, he goes to the Scripture, and bends it, to make it speak answerable to that; and where it speaks contrary, he invents a way to make it comply, and so wrests scriptures forward and backward, to make them speak agreeable to what he has already received and believed. Thus every sort of persons, Papists and Protestants, bend the Scriptures, to make them speak conformable to their opinions and practices; not having *the true learning*, which gives to read them in the true original, where the knowledge of what they speak and mean is certain: and so they are also *unstable*, and subject to be shaken by a wind of reason which is stronger than their own. And this wresting of scripture is *to their own destruction;* for that part which is so much as desirous to bend a scripture, is to be destroyed; and that part cannot receive the true knowledge; but stumbles in its own wisdom and way of seeking, at the wisdom of God, and at the true way of finding.

But the foregoing counsel, faithfully hearkened unto, will preserve out of this, and also bring to the true means, and to the true use of the means, which all nations, who have drunk of the whore's cup, have erred concerning, and taken the false for the true. The strength of this wine hath made all nations, people, tongues, and languages, to mistake; who, in the heat of their drink, have cried up the means, the means, the ordinances, the ordinances, &c., not perceiving how this heat came from the spirits of the whore's wine, and not from the sober, meek, calm, gentle leadings of the Spirit of Christ; and so, in a fleshly zeal, have set up the whore's means, instead of the Lamb's means, and contend for them with the whore's spirit and weapons. Now it is impossible for any man so much as to know the true means till the whore's wine be purged out of him; for that will

make him err in judgment, and take the false for the true. And which way shall he ever come to the kingdom, who has lighted upon the wrong means? Or how shall he ever come to the true means, who never yet saw the witchery of the whorish spirit from the life, and how he himself hath been bewitched and cozened with the false, instead of the true? As for instance:

Prayer; that is generally taken for a means: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. If parents, which are evil, know how to give good gifts to their children; how much more shall the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" This therefore is an undoubted thing, that prayer is a means.

Ans. True; there is a prayer which is a means, and there is a prayer which is not a means. There is a prayer which is an ordinance, and there is a prayer which is an invention. There is a prayer which is the breath of the true child, and there is a prayer which is the breath of the fleshly part, a breath of the whorish spirit. There is a prayer of the first birth, and there is a prayer of the second birth; both which cry and weep to God for the same thing. Now the one of these is the true means, the other not: one of them is Christ's ordinance, the other is antichrist's ordinance. Now the question is, which of these thy prayer is; whether it be thine own breath, or God's breath; whether it come from the renewings of the Spirit of life, or from thine own natural part painted. For accordingly it is either the true means, or the false means. If it be the true means, it shall have the thing; the Spirit, the life, the kingdom it prays for: if it be the false means, it can never obtain it. Papists, they pray; Protestants, they pray; some in forms, some without forms; some meditating before-hand, some not meditating. Are all these the true means; or are any of them the true means? The birth of the true child is the only true prayer; and he prays only in the moving and in the leading of that Spirit that begat him: and this is a prayer according to the will, in the life, and from the power. But all men's prayers, ac-

cording to times they set to themselves, or according to formings of desires in their own minds, which they offer up to God with the nature and heart that sinneth against him, these are false means, and may satisfy the drunken spirit erred from the life, but are no means to the truth.

Canst thou pray? How camest thou to learn to pray? Wast thou taught from above? or didst thou gain the skill and ability by the exercise and improvement of thine own natural part? Didst thou begin with sighs and groans, staying there till the same Spirit that taught thee to groan, taught thee also to speak? Wast thou ever able to distinguish the sighs and groans of the Spirit's begetting, from the sighs and groans of thy own natural and affectionate part? And hath that part, with all its sighings, groanings, desires, endeavors, &c., been thrust aside, and the seed immortal raised by the Spirit of eternal life, which teacheth to cry and mourn, and at length to speak, to the Father for the preservation and nourishment of his life? If it hath been thus with thee, then thou hast known that prayer which is the true means; but if otherwise, though thou pray ever so long, and with ever so great affections, and strong desires, this is all but the false means, with its false warmth from the false fire; this is but the means which the whorish spirit (which is not in union with the life and power, but keeps the seed in bondage) has set up instead of the true means. And this can never lead to truth, but keeps alive God's enemy under this pleasant covering. Neither is this the worship of the living God: but as it is from another spirit, so it is to another spirit.

Oh learn to be sober! Come out of this drunken fury, and consider things mildly and seriously. Do not make a great outcry of ordinances, ordinances! the means, the means! This is the voice of the clamorous woman, who, with her loud noise, would fain keep you from listening after the still voice of true wisdom, which cannot be heard in the midst of this great noise and hurry in your spirits: but consider which are the true ordinances, which are the true means; which are the likenesses man has framed, and

which is the true thing itself. And if ye could once be mild, gentle, and calm, and turn from your own wisdom and fleshly knowledge of things, it might please God to remove your stumbling-blocks, and to open that eye in you which can see the antichristian nature, and discern between the coverings which it hath formed to hide its deceitful spirit under, and the true garment and clothing of life. But the seed of the kingdom is little, and ye are great; how can ye enter into it? The pearl lies hid in the field, and ye are gazing up to heaven; how can ye see it? Christ is descended into the lower parts of the earth, and ye are using means to ascend upwards in the wrong nature; how can ye meet with him? The gospel hath been hid; the sun hath not shined; it hath been night, and ye have got many false candles; which way can ye acknowledge the little glimmering of the day-star, who have such satisfaction in the warmth of your false fires? Ye are far from the true light, who have not yet received so much of it as to discover the darkness of the night. Ye are too high, too wise, too knowing for Christ, or for the sight and acknowledgment of the true means which lead to life. And if ye could once come to see this, there might be some hope; but in that wisdom wherein your life and knowledge stand, ye are shut out; and ye are reasoning and stumbling at the stone; while others (who are broken in spirit, and in meekness and humility led to try) find it a sure foundation, even a foundation of eternal life, for the true seed of life; and are built into the living city, which is made without hands, and without any of the tools of man's wisdom.

A Brief History of the State of the Church since the Days of the Apostles, with the living Seal to it; which he that hath eternal Life abiding in him can read and witness; but that Wisdom, Zeal, and Devotion, which is in the Death, cannot.

After the universal degeneration and corruption of the Jewish state, and the putting an end to the shadows thereof, by the appearance and succession of the substance, it pleased God to dissolve that people, state, and policy; and by the power of his life, without either the wisdom or strength of man, to set upon the heathenish world, which he subdued and brought under the power of his life. By his apostles and messengers, who preached the everlasting gospel, the word of eternal life, he gathered assemblies up and down the nations, whom the nations by all their persecutions could not subject; but they reigned over them in the power, authority, and dominion of God: for they were kings and priests to God in the sight of all the nations, and they did reign upon the earth: insomuch as the heathenish spirit of man observing their order in the Spirit, and the wisdom and power of the Spirit among them, who by his living light was able to search the hearts of those who came to observe them, could not but acknowledge that God was in them of a truth.

Now the next thing to be expected, is Satan's opposition against this power of life, and his stratagems to undermine it. He withstood the growth and settlement of the church all that he could by open force, making use both of the heathenish devout worshippers, who fought for their Jupiter, their Diana, and other gods and goddesses; and of the Jewish devout worshippers, who fought for their temple-worship, with the laws and ordinances of Moses, which were now expired. But neither of these would do; but the church, in the power of life, gained ground upon him, and did rather thrive and increase, than diminish by this opposition. Therefore now he falls to his stratagems; he gets

some false brethren out of the church (*they went out from us*); these he clothes as angels of light, puts the sheep's clothing on their wolfish nature, makes them appear as like the apostles as may be, endues them with an excellent, taking knowledge of life and spirituality in appearance; forms in them an image of the Truth, and inspires this image with the spirit of his own life; and with these he goes forth into the world, and gathers the world about him. Now the world was presently taken with this (*the world went after him*); for this is that the world would have, an appearance of religion, an image of Truth, but their own spirit in it. The worldly spirit, that flies off from the life, from the power, can readily close with this, because it is its own. Bring forth ever so high notions of religion and spiritual wisdom, the world will hug them, the world will feed on them, the world will clothe itself with them. The world can swallow and digest any thing but life; any pleasant picture of things in heaven will down with the world; but the nature, the life, the Truth, the Spirit, Christ in his true and living cross, this will not down with the world.

Now the devil having thus set up his false image in the world, and gathered a party after him, then he sets upon the church, and the battle goeth very hard, life striving to defend, and death to overcome. How hard did the apostles strive in their day to keep their converts to the simplicity of Truth, and to the way thereof (which even then began to be evil spoken of); writing epistles to the churches, warning them of the false apostles, and wishing them to stand their ground! Yea, Christ himself writes several epistles from heaven to some of them, checking their back-slidings, and encouraging them to renew their zeal and strength, putting them in mind of the crown which attended the victory. But at length the devil with his stratagems prevails, gets the possession of the church's territories, and the church is fain to fly for her preservation; and such of her seed as are left behind her, the enemy makes war against, slays, and drinks their blood.

Now here is an end of all the glory of that state: now

the devil hath gained the world again: the same spirit that lost it under the heathenish power (for there he was conquered) recovers it under an antichristian appearance, setting up the same wickedness, and the same course and current of death, under forms of antichristian religion, as he had done before under forms of heathenish devotion.

Thus the devil being conqueror, having gained the field, he divides the spoils among his army: he takes whatever was the church's and makes his own, and ranks them in his way of antichristian religion and devotion; so that henceforward those things which were once Christ's and the church's are now all his, and distributed by him among his followers. He gives the name church to the whore which he sets up; he gives the name Christian to his disciples; he prescribes baptism and the supper, which he calls sacraments, and praying and preaching and singing, which he calls public ordinances; and he prescribes private duties and exercises of devotion; and he gets the letter of the Scriptures, and forms multitudes of meanings and expositions, and has lying signs and wonders for such as need them, that he might keep all the several brigades of his army quite under his pay, and might have some pleasing wares of traffic for every sort of his merchants in his Babylon. For this is the city of that king, which he built after his conquest over the life, and which he hath enriched with the spoils from the life. And here all his subjects shall have content; they shall have what they will, if they will but be faithful to him in the main. Call for what likeness, what invention, what appearance of truth they will, they shall have it, so that they will but be content without life. No notion about the Spirit will he deny them, so they will be content with the notion, without the presence of the living Spirit. They shall have light in their understandings, warmth in their affections, joy, peace, hope, comfort out of the Scriptures. They shall apply as many promises to themselves as they will, have what they will, do what they will, so they keep out of the feeling of the living principle; but if once that stir, and there be any hearkening after that, then he begins

to show his tyranny, on the one hand, to force them back; and his stratagems, on the other hand, to tempt them aside from it.

The devil having thus gained the form, and enriched himself with the church's spoils, and slain them which had the living testimony, then he falls to corrupting the form: for that filthy spirit, though he can clothe himself with the form to deceive from the life, and abide there to keep down the life; yet he does not much love it; he loves his own form better: and when he is out of fear and assaults from the life, then he returns to his own form again, or patches up a garment more suitable to his own nature, taking in somewhat of the other with it, to make his own pass the better; for if he should have returned to the direct heathenish forms of idolatry and false worship, he could not so have lain hid; therefore he makes a mixture of somewhat which was prescribed to the Jews, with some things found practised among the Christians. Thus he brought in inventions of crosses and images and beads and pictures and reliques and ceremonies beyond number: insomuch as not only the life and power was lost, but the true likeness also; even so lost that it is impossible for all the wisdom of man to recover the knowledge of the likeness again. Men have striven much; but they never could form a true likeness of the primitive church, and the way thereof.

Now though it is the desire of the devil to keep men in the grossness of darkness, yet, rather than lose them, he will let them have some part of the form again: nay, he will tempt them with a gaudy appearance of the form, to keep them from meeting with the power and life, when he perceives true, secret, inward stirrings in them, which will not be quieted without somewhat. Thus, when there was a stirring against Popery, he tempted aside into Episcopacy: when that would hold no longer, then to Presbytery: when that will not serve, into Independency: when that will not keep quiet, but still there are searchings further, into Anabaptism: if that will not do, into a way of Seeking and Waiting: if this will not satisfy, they shall have high no-

tions, yea, most pleasant notions concerning the Spirit, and concerning the life, if they will but be satisfied without the life: yea, they shall have all the liberty in the creatures they can desire (the best-painted liberty), if they will but be satisfied without that liberty which stands not in the creatures out of the life, but over the creatures in the life. And he that turns aside to any of these, he is still under the dominion of that spirit; and there he holds knowledge, and there he performs his worship, and there he has his unity, his liberty, his life, his rest, his peace, his joy, his hope. Now no man can worship God, till he comes out of every part of this Babylon, and his feet touch Sion; though there may be a secret panting, and an unknown safety, and an acceptation of the poor, mourning soul in the passage. Yea, all sorts of people, here ye were accepted in your stirrings after life, in hearkening to the leadings of life from out of the Babylonish spirit; but your turning aside to the Babylonish wisdom in a new dress, and sitting down in a new form of her inventing, hath brought you to a loss of life, and hath made you hateful to the living God, who hath drawn his sword against you, and hath prepared his vials, his thunders, his plagues, his woes: and ye must drink of his cup with sorrow, as ye have drunk of the whore's cup with pleasure. Ye that have found a bed of pleasure in any of your forms, or in any of your notions, and so have found ease in the whore's painting; ye must be cast into the bed of sorrow, and know the fire in God's Sion, and the furnace in his Jerusalem; if ever ye become a habitation for God, or expect to feed on his holy mountain.

The condition of the church all this while (all this time of Satan's reign in forms of knowledge and worship) hath been very lamentable, and is expressed in scripture by parables and resemblances of a sad state. She hath been as a city pulled down, like a ruined city, which needs rebuilding before she can come to be a city again (*when the Lord shall build up Sion*). She hath been as a wilderness, barren, undressed, unregarded. She hath been like a mournful widow, whose husband hath been rent from her, and her children

slain. She hath lost all her ornaments, all her garments, all her ordinances, all her appearances, and ways of life, insomuch as *the ways of Sion mourn.* But Babylon, the mother of harlots, she has got all the beauty, all the glory, all the church's attire, all the church's ordinances, and all the trade and traffic run thither, and she is cried up for the true church; and if any dare speak a word against her, and for the true church indeed, they are exclaimed against for schismatics and heretics, and war prepared against them, and some or other of the beast's horns pushing at them. Thus it has gone all the time of the apostasy; the whore has flourished with the name of the church, making great merchandize of souls, selling their formal stuff for money; and abundance of children hath the whore brought forth, and nourished with her milk of deceit; but the true woman, the Lamb's wife, with her seed, and the living food from her living breasts, has had no place on the earth.

But this state of things is ended in part, and ending apace. The Lord God of life is arisen out of his holy habitation to assault the dragon, to discover and strip the whore, to recover a possession for his life in the earth, to make room in the world for his church, which he is bringing out of the wilderness. The battle is begun; the territories of antichrist are assaulted; the Lamb hath appeared on his white horse, and hath gathered many of his called, faithful, and chosen about him; the ensign is lifted up; the light (which searcheth the inwards of the enemy's dominions) hath appeared, and his inmost power and wisdom are not feared; but the Lord God is feared, and the dragon's arm withers, and the head of his policy (whereby he ensnared and entangled from the life) is crushing. Glory to the endless power of life, for ever and for ever!

Be wise now therefore, and lose not your share in the immortal crown. Take heed how ye be found fighters against the Lamb, in the wisdom and power of Babylon, which is to fall. Painting will not pass now: that blood of the Lamb is felt, which washes off the whore's paint; even all her painted notions of the blood of Christ, and of sanctification

and redemption, &c., the whorish nature being discovered underneath all these. Ye have got the name of church, the name of Christians, the name of ordinances, &c., by the whore's help; but the nature of life ye want: and the living power is come to recover the name from you; and we, his living witnesses, testify to your faces, that ye shall not enjoy it; but the name and the thing shall go together; and he that hath not the thing shall also lose the name. Yea, your eyes shall see that ye have been the sacrilegious ones, who have stolen holy names and titles, which ye never received from the hand of God; but the whorish spirit (which is out of the life, and an enemy to the life) hath handed them to you. And this is told you in dear and tender love, that ye might not perish, but have eternal life abiding in your hearts, and the new name written by the Spirit of life on your foreheads, which all that know the writing of the life, may be able to read and acknowledge.

There are several touches of these things in divers of the epistles of the apostles: but the full relation is given forth in that book of the Revelations, which was penned by the Spirit of God, to be read in the light of the Spirit, and so to be a preservative against the overspreading contagion of Antichristianism. And it is said, at the entrance into it, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." But men having lost the Spirit, have not been able to read it; and having lost the right ear, they have not been able to hear the words it speaks: and how then could they keep the things written therein? He that doth not understand what he is warned against, how is it likely he should be preserved by the warning? The Spirit of God judged this warning necessary, but the spirit of deceit cries, it is a deep thing not to be meddled with. Now this is a plain demonstration, that men generally are overtaken with the whoredom, and drink of the whore's cup, and submit themselves to the beast, and exalt his horns, and receive his mark, and some or other of his names; because they have not the knowledge of that which discovers these things, and

was given by the Spirit of God to forewarn, and so to preserve out of them. He that knoweth not the mystery of iniquity working under a form of godliness, may not he easily be deceived with the mystery of iniquity? He that knoweth not what is become of the true church and ministry, and where to look for them, may not he easily own a false church and ministry? He that knoweth not the Spirit of the Scriptures, which the church carried with her, when she left the letter behind her, may not he easily set up the letter for his rule? He that knoweth not the living mark and name of a Christian, with which the Spirit of life seals all the lambs of Christ in the life, may not he easily give this name to himself, and to others who have not this mark, but the beast's mark? He that knoweth not the true faith, the true love, the true hope, the true joy, the true peace, the true rest, the true consolation in Christ the life (the true meekness and patience of the saints, &c.), may not he easily set up shadows or likenesses of these (which he gathers from the letter of the Scriptures and the promises thereof, receiving the knowledge of them into the wrong part, and applying them to the wrong thing) instead of these? Ah, poor hearts! the book of the Revelation is easy to that Spirit that wrote it: and it was not given forth to be laid by as useless; but to be serviceable in the hand of the Spirit, for the ages after the days of the apostles; and in the true light it is easily read: and they that can read it, can see that in it, which they that cannot read it, cannot believe. And this is plainly seen; that there is but the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of deceit: but the Lamb's wife, and the whore (which hath whored from the Spirit, which hath made use of the letter, to run a whoring from that Spirit that wrote it): that there is but the true church, and the false church; but life, and death; but form, and power; but Christ the mystery of godliness, and antichrist the mystery of iniquity; but God, and the dragon; God in the church or temple in the wilderness, and the dragon in the world's churches and temples, appearing there as if he were God, giving forth laws and ordinances like God; and all the world falls down

before him, and worships him as if he were God; and hopes by this worship which they perform to him, and by their faith and hope which they receive from him, to be saved at last. I say there are but these two: and he that is joined to the one of these, is not joined to the other. Let him that readeth understand; which he may easily do by the wisdom of the Spirit, but never can by the wisdom of the letter. For though we know how to join these two in the life, yet there is a necessity of separating them at present, till the letter be gained out of the hands of the whorish spirit, which hath built up several forms of knowledge, religion, and worship in Mystery Babylon, by the letter without the life; all which must fall with Babylon.

AN EXHORTATION,

Relating to the workings of the mystery of iniquity, and the mystery of godliness in this present age.

All people upon earth who love your souls, and have any true, secret pantings after God, look to the nature of your spirits, and look to the nature of those things ye let into your minds; lest ye take death for life, error for truth, and so sow to yourselves corruption, and rear up a fabric in Mystery Babylon, which will be turned into desolation and utter ruins, by the power of life from Sion.

Strong is the spirit of deceit that is entered into the world, and glorious and very taking are his images and likenesses of truth; which will deceive all but the very elect, who were chosen from the foundation of the world, and whose eyes are open to see the foundation of life, which was before the foundation of the world.

It hath been a heavy, dull time for many ages: there have only been witnesses hitherto raised against antichrist, and he hath found it an easy matter to knock them down, and keep up his ways of profaneness, and of formal, superstitious

kinds of devotion, up and down all the nations. But now it is a quick time; the Spirit of the Lord God hath arisen, the searching eye is opened, the pursuit after the very spirit of antichrist is begun; yea, very quick and fresh is the scent of that Spirit which hunteth the whore; and now she goes forward and backward, traverses her ground, changes her paint and colors often, shifts her garment continually, and uses all the art she can to save her life. Now the king of Babylon opens his treasury, brings forth all his likenesses, all his images, all appearances; with some or other of them (if it be possible) to tempt the simple soul, and keep it satisfied therewith, in some of his chambers of darkness and imagery, out of the life and power.

Therefore now be warned and look about you, and be not cozened with any of the wares of Babylon, where the merchandize and traffic is for souls, and where all the wares of deceit are, which are proper to cozen souls: but seek for the nature of that thing, which the inward pantings of your hearts at any time have been after; and wait for the opening of that eye, which can see, through all manner of paint, to that nature; and keep low in the life, simple and honest-hearted, and then gaudy appearances will not take with you; for they are only temptations to the aspiring part, which is lifted up above the pure, low, humble principle: and if that part were brought down, ye would be safe; but while that stands, ye will not be out of the danger of temptations. Now this know:

There is nothing whereof Sion is built, but the likeness of it is in Babylon; and the likeness is very taking, even more taking to that eye which is open in men, than the truth itself. The truth is a plain, simple thing; it is not gaudy in appearance; its excellency lies in its nature: but the appearances of truth which Satan paints are very gaudy, very glorious, seemingly very spiritual, very pure, very precious, very sweet; they many times even ravish that understanding and those affections that are out of the life. Oh, what shall I say! Shall I speak a little of the wares of Babylon? Where is there an ear which can hear me? Yet

he that opens my mouth, can open thine ear: therefore let me speak a little plainly.

1. There are many glorious false births in Babylon. There is no inheriting the kingdom, but by being born again. This doctrine the king of Babylon preacheth; he is fain to do so, else the letter of the Scripture would overthrow his kingdom. Now, therefore, to keep from the true new birth, he hath his images of the new birth, his several false births. A great while outward baptism and a formal knowledge were enough to make a man a Christian; but now, since that is discovered, and will not do, he brings forth better births; he hath inward changes of the mind (multitudes of them) fit for every one who is seeking after the life, to be tempted from the life with; and he tempts every one with a proper bait, with that which is taking to him in his present estate. What changes any kind of knowledge, by virtue of the notion (with the devil's quickening power added to it), can produce in any man, the devil can transform man into. Yea, many are these changes; and he that doth not know the nature of the true birth, may easily be deceived with that which is just like the thing he looks for. A man looks for a new birth, for an inward change; he looks for a knowledge to change him: he shall have just the very likeness of that which his heart desires, the lively likeness; the devil is ready at hand to furnish him with it: which way can the man, who never saw the true thing, espy the cheat?

2. There are many glorious desires in Babylon, many pantings, many breathings after that which this birth of Babylon takes to be life. The devil hath these wares, these images in his shop too; as he hath a false birth in imitation of the true, so he hath false breathings for his false birth. If his child could not seemingly breathe towards God, as if he were a natural child of God, he would soon be detected; therefore he inflames him with desires of growth, with desires of enjoyment, of that which he calls life, with seeming desires of serving and glorifying God; and here come in the prayers of the fleshly birth, which are many times carried

on with exceeding great earnestness of the fleshly part, to which also the father of this birth gives answers. And now which way can deceit be so much as suspected here? And yet here also the deceiver lodgeth, and herein he worketh, raising strong desires in that part wherein he dwells, that he may allay those pure desires, which otherwise would be arising from the life underneath, and which, notwithstanding all this, sometimes do arise, especially when the soul is in anguish.

3. There is false food in Babylon, false knowledge to feed this wrong nature with; there is *knowledge, falsely so called.* There are several appearances of all the truths in Sion. There is outward knowledge of the letter, and there is inward, mystical knowledge; and each of these have their warmth, and their freshness, and do nourish up this child, and cause it to grow. Yea, what knowledge and experience, which at first sprang from the true life, this spirit makes a prey of, and daily brings into his Babylon, therewith to feed and fatten that which is born of him, and to cover the old, deceitful nature under, which is not slain thereby, but daily lives, and moves, and puts forth itself; this is certainly felt by that which is made sensible in the life, but hard to be spoken, because the deceived heart is so gross, and the ear so heavy. Now here the painted whore, which hath dealt treacherously with the life, sits as a queen, and says she shall see no sorrow: this knowledge is certain to her, these experiences she hath had the feeling of, and knows they can never be shaken. But, O thou princess of Babylon! the Lord will strip thee, the Lord will unbear thy inwards, and thine own eyes shall see thy nakedness, which shall be for a perpetual reproach among all the inhabitants of Sion: and then thy dark, deceitful spirit shall have no more to say against those who now see through thy covering, to thy nature, in the light; and judge thee, not of themselves, nor in their own wills and understandings, but from the true power, and in the true guidance of the life, whose work it is to pursue, overtake, and judge death, even to death. For all this knowledge, all these experiences in thee, though thou seest

it not, nor canst see it with that eye wherewith thou lookest to see, are held captive by that which transgressed, and hath erred from the life, and are made use of to keep thy soul in bands: and as they are thus held, death and the curse must overtake them, ere that life in thee, from which they first sprang, can possibly arise. Grasp not after the knowledge of this in the understanding part, but wait for the sense of it from that life which lies slain underneath these, and by that part which exalts these.

4. There are false keys to open the several chambers of imagery in Babylon. This food man cannot gather of himself, it must be given to him: this knowledge man cannot get into by himself, but as this spirit leads him, and opens to him; for he hath the keys of death, and opens into the treasures of death. Now this hugely confirms a man in the deceit, without the least suspicion of it. Why, saith he, I had not this knowledge from myself, I came not to it by mine own skill or understanding, but it was given me, it was opened to me; and it came in fresh, and warmed in my heart, begetting sweet and pure desires in me, and hath made me eye the glory of God, and not myself. Yea, it might come thus in the likeness, and work the likeness of this in thee; and yet itself not be truth, nor be able to work the truth of this in thee; and this is proper to deceive thy very heart, and make thee a pleasant inhabitant of Babylon, and a joyful worshipper of the king thereof, whom, through this deep deceit, and most subtle false appearance in thy heart, thou mistakest for the King of Sion.

5. This false spirit hath his false crosses, his false combats and fightings. The very Papists have not only their wooden and stone crosses, but they have also their ways of self-denial, their ways of crossing the natural part, of resignation to the Divine Will, as they call it, of fighting against corruption, &c. It is manifest that a man must deny himself, or else he cannot be a Christian (his own will must not, cannot live, if he truly give himself up to Christ): therefore that spirit which lieth lurking to deceive, hath several

ways of self-denial to teach, all which must have some hardness in them to the natural part, or else they could not pass; and these may produce great and constant conflicting in the flesh, and yet the fleshly nature be still kept alive under all these conflicts and exercises of self-denial. He hath a circumcising-knife, which cuts off a great deal, but always spares the nature; and as long as the nature is spared, the devil still hath that wherein he can dwell.

6. He hath his false love to God and man, and his false zeal for God. Love and zeal are two distinguishing things. All men conclude that love determines a man to be a Christian, and so they take up some appearance or other of love; somewhat that satisfies themselves that their love is right, both to God and man. The very Papists, who are full of blood and cruelty, yet pretend to love; they have an image of love which contents them. But there are far higher images, even images of universal love and sweetness, which no eye can perceive, but that which knows the truth. And take one word from me, ye to whom it belongs: all ye that cry up universal love from the sweet sense of its image, ye shall one day know, that one act of particular love from the true nature, exceeds this in its utmost extent.

7. He hath his false life. The devil hath not only a dead, formal religion, but he hath a resemblance, an imitation of the quickenings of the spirit. The devil puts his life into his image, where need requires. He hath not only a dead, literal knowledge, but he hath paintings of the life; he draws a thing to the life; he makes his dead image of truth as like the living substance of truth as possibly he can; insomuch as his images of life, at a distance, without being beheld in the true life, cannot but be taken for living. Now here is the depth of deceit, when the devil's images of life in the heart are taken for the living thing, for the life itself.

8. He hath his false liberty. There is a glorious liberty in the Gospel: there is a perfect freedom in the service of the life; there is a liberty in the power of the life over all the creatures. God made all things for man, and he denies him nothing; he being in subjection to him in the life, and

using all in the dominion of the life. Now the devil paints a liberty like this; yea, a liberty that seems greater than this, even a liberty wherein the fleshly part (whose very nature is eternally shut out of the nature of true liberty) hath scope; which liberty is not surrounded, and cannot be surrounded by the power of life, as this is; and in this painted liberty, that spirit which painted it lives; which paint the true liberty takes off, slaying that which calls it liberty, and gathering in the name of liberty from this false appearance, to that which is liberty indeed. And by the way, he that can read this, let him. The perfection of the true liberty lies in the perfection of bonds, in the perfect binding down of that which is out of the life; for the true liberty is the liberty of the life, and of nothing else; and when all that is contrary to the life is perfectly bound down, then the life hath its full scope, without the least control of the fleshly part; and when the life lives, then that which is joined to the life lives also.

Now here is the mystery of iniquity; here is the inward kingdom of darkness; here is the glory of Babylon! Here is he that contends for the kingdom, for the inheritance! Here the son of the bond-woman (thus dressed, thus furnished, thus filled within and without) will have it go for granted that he is the right heir: and yet all this while wants the nature of that which is to inherit, and cannot possibly receive that nature into himself, but only such images aforementioned. And if, in tender love to his soul, from a clear sight of this thing, we warn him, and bid him look about, he cries, Do not judge. He really thinks he is right in the main, and he seems willing to refer it to the day of trial. Ah, poor heart! the eye is opened which can see; that which hath judged the deceit in us, can also judge the deceit in thee. Cannot the spiritual eye see things in its kind? To what end hath God given it? Canst thou see and judge natural things in the natural part? So can they see and judge spiritual things who are in the light, and who live in the life; yea, we shall continue judging thee in the

fear, and in the humility, till God open that in thee, which can seal to our judgment.

Object. *How difficult do you make the way to life, if not utterly impossible! If all this be true, Who can be saved!*

Ans. The way to life is very difficult; yea, and impossible to that part in man, which is so busy in willing and running towards life; but it is as easy, on the other hand, to that which the Father begetteth, raiseth up, and leadeth. "The wayfaring-man, though a fool, shall not err." The wisest and richest merchants in Babylon cannot set one step in it; the least child in Sion cannot err there. Therefore know that in thyself to which it is so hard: and know that which God hath given to thee, which will make it easy.

Thou hast a living talent given thee by God; let not thine eye be drawn from that; but join to that, keep there, and thou art safe; and that will open thine eye to see all deceits, just in the very season and hour of temptation. For thou must expect to meet with all these temptations, as thy growth makes thee capable of receiving them. And as they come, the true eye being kept open, they will be seen; and being seen they will easily be avoided in the power of life; for in vain the net is spread in sight of the bird. Therefore that thou mayst be safe:

1. Know the light, the eternal light of life, the little glimmerings and shinings of it in thy soul. This comes from the rock, to lead thee to the rock: and if thou wilt follow it, it will fix thee upon the rock where thou canst not be shaken.

2. Keep in the light, keep within the hedge, step not out of thine own, keep out of the circumference of the spirit of deceit; the power of whose witchery and sorcery extends all over the regions of darkness.

3. Love simplicity, love the nakedness of life, stand single in the honesty of the heart, out of the intricate, subtle reasonings, and wise consultings about things; for by these means the serpent comes to twine about and deceive thy soul; but in the simplicity of the movings of life, in the light, lie the power, the strength, the safety.

4. Lie very low continually, even at the foot of the lowest

breathing and appearances of the light. Take heed of being above that wherein the life lies; for the wisdom, the power, the strength, yea, the great glory lie in the humility; and thou must never be exalted, thou must never come out of the humility, but find and enjoy the honor and glory of the life in the humility.

5. Mind the reproofs of the light; for that will still be setting thee to rights. That will still be bringing down that which would get up above; and there lies the preservation. Oh the chastenings of the light, the sweet chastenings of the love by the light! These are healing stripes. This brings down the exalter, and that in thee which loves to be exalted, and to be seeking the honor of the spiritual riches, before the humility is perfected.

Thus, in love to souls, have I poured out my soul before the Lord, and held forth gentle leadings, even to the most stubborn and stiff-necked.

A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF SOME

REASONS

(Amongst many that might be given)

Why those People called QUAKERS cannot do some Things on the one hand, and forbear doing of some Things on the other hand; for which they have suffered, and do still suffer, so much Violence from the People, and such sore Persecution from the Teachers and Magistrates of these Nations. Whereby it may appear to all, who are willing to take any fair Consideration of their Cause, that their Sufferings are for Righteousness' Sake, because of the Integrity of their Hearts towards God, and void of any just Ground of Offence towards Man.

This account was drawn up thus brief, for their sakes who want either time or patience to consider of it more at large; and answers to the heads of their sufferings, in a particular declaration to the PARLIAMENT.

1. *Why we go into meeting-places or markets or other-where to testify to the truth, and against deceit.*

Reason. Because we are moved of the Lord so to do. We are his; and where he bids us witness for him, and against deceivers and their deceit, we must do it: woe unto

us (from the Lord) if we do it not. If any man do any such thing in his own will, we witness against him, and the Lord will require it of him. Now this is no more than the apostles and servants of the Lord have done, as it is recorded in Scripture.

2. *Why we cannot pay tithes.*

Reas. Because tithes were not a maintenance appointed by Christ for his ministers, but were set up by the Pope (as the maintenance of his ministers) since the days of the apostles. And this maintenance by tithes, Wickliff and others bore a testimony against, and divers of the martyrs in Queen Mary's days suffered for, as by the articles charged against them, and the testimony that they held forth, may appear.

3. *Why we meet together on the first days of the week, and at other times.*

Reas. Because we find the Lord drawing of us, and his presence among us in our meetings, and receive refreshings to our souls thereby.

4. *Why we cannot swear.*

Reas. Because Christ our Lord (who is greater than Moses, who gave the law about swearing) hath said, "Swear not at all;" and his apostle (who abode in his doctrine) saith, "Above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath." Now mark the drift of Christ, which is not only to forbid profane and unlawful oaths (for if that were all, Christ had spoken nothing further nor fuller than Moses had done; which is contrary to all the instances of the like kind, whereby he straitens all that had been said by Moses of old time), but all swearing, without exception, as may further appear by the instance immediately foregoing, in the case of divorce, where he expresseth an exception in these words, "Saving for the cause of fornication;" but here is no exception added by Christ; and the putting in of an exception by man's wisdom, destroyeth Christ's words, making his command no straiter than the law of Moses, which forbade all profane and unlawful swearing. Levit. xix. 12.

5. *Why we cannot put off our hats to men.*

Reas. Because it lifts up that in man which God will destroy. It is suitable to that nature which is of the earth, and feeds it. It is pleasing to the flesh; and that which is an enemy to the flesh, cannot give it that which feeds and pleaseth it. If we should please men, we could not be the servants of Christ. This is the true ground whereupon we cannot do it; and not in contempt to authority, or any man's person. Neither can we respect men's persons; for in so doing we should commit sin, as saith the apostle. And let men consider what it is in them that cannot bear with it; it being done in simplicity of heart upon this account.

6. *Why we cannot justly be looked upon as vagrants or sturdy beggars.*

Reas. Because we beg not, nor pass up and down in any idle way; but either about our civil employments and occasions, or about the work of our God; nor are any way burthensome to the nation. If to be from our dwellings about the work of our God, be accounted the breach of a law, would not the same law have taken hold on Christ and his apostles, if it had been in their days?

7. *Why we visit friends in prison.*

Reas. Beeause they being imprisoned for their obedience to Christ, what we do to them, we do to him; and we are afraid, lest he should say to us at the great day; "I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Now they that are so far from doing this themselves, that they punish others for doing it, when God shall call them to account, what will they answer?

8. *Why we cannot contribute towards the repairing of the steeple-houses, or pay clerks' wages.*

Reas. Because they are places which were erected for *popish and idolatrous worship;* and where a worship not differing in its nature and ground (but only in form) is continued in this day; and the root from whence all this idolatry grew, is not so much as discovered, much less purged out of these dominions, by them who formerly declared against it in words. Now as we will answer it to

God, we are to give no countenance or furtherance to idolatry. And for clerks, they were officers invented by the false church (since the apostasy), never appointed by Christ in his church, and such we dare not help to maintain. Was it not solemnly covenanted with the Lord against superstition, for the plucking up of Episcopacy, root and branch? And must not those that are faithful to the Lord perform their covenant, though to their hurt?

Now any man that shall in the fear of the Lord read this, may see that these things bear a weight upon our hearts; and what we do herein, we do for conscience' sake, in obedience to the Lord; and not out of stubbornness or rebellion, as by some we are charged, nor out of any delight that we have to disturb or disquiet others; but singly to the Lord, that we may stand clear in his sight. We know whom we obey therein, and are sure we do that which is pleasing to him. Therefore let men take heed how they persecute us, lest they be found fighters against him who will be too strong for them. For these many ages, since the days of the apostles, deceit hath got up, antichrist hath sat in the temple, the true worshippers have been imprisoned and martyred. The Lord will avenge the sufferings and blood of his saints, and in due time will plead their cause against the oppressors, on whom his hand will then fall heavy, and the rocks and the mountains shall not be able to hide them from the presence of the Lamb; and that day who will be able to abide? though now men put it far from them.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Proposed to the City of LONDON, and the nation of ENGLAND, to calm their spirits, and prepare them to wait for what the LORD is bringing about, that they may not run headily into their ruin and destruction; and, by this extraordinary heat of their spirits, kindle that Fire which will soon devour them: with a short exhortation to them relating to their true Settlement, and the Removal of that which hinders it.

1. THE Lord God Almighty, who made heaven and earth; who upholds them by the word of his power; whose they are, with all their inhabitants; he ruleth in the kingdoms of men; establishing or overturning laws, governments, and governors at his pleasure. Psal. lxxv. 5. &c. Dan. iv. 25, iii. 5.

2. That the Lord hath had an especial hand in the shakings and changes of this nation; and hath some great things to bring about, which he ordereth all unto. And though many of the transactions and passages (as relating to men) have been very blamable; yet the Lord hath been just and good in them all; and can, in his own good time, recover the ground which he hath seemed to lose, and advance both the good of his people, and of the nation, by all their sufferings, losses, discouragements, and disadvantages.

3. In this late revolution, there may be more of God than man is aware of. God, in his infinite wisdom, might see that this parliament was not fit for work, and so might suffer such a thing to fall out between them and the army (heightening their spirits on both sides) as might occasion the removal of them out of the way. Yea, and this present change may be but a passage to another, unless the Lord find these very faithful and diligent in his service, and not minding themselves and their own interests.

4. If this late revolution was of God, and he saw it good to bring it about, for the further carrying on of his work, he will be able to maintain it; and those that oppose him therein shall not be able to stand before him. They may bring ruin upon the nation and themselves; but they cannot set up what God throws down, nor raise up any thing else in the stead of it, according to their wills; but that which he, by his providence and disposing hand, appointed to succeed, must have the time of trial which he allotteth it.

Therefore let men fear the Lord God, whose eye is upon us, and whose power is over us; and let us take heed of being found fighters against him. The cause hath long lain a bleeding; yet there is at length a true reviving of it: and those whose hearts the Lord hath stirred up to seek it faithfully, the Lord will be with them, and he is ready to pardon their former miscarriages. But oh, that they could lay themselves low, and forget their own interests, that the cause might rise up clear and manifest above them! Remember this saying, O ye great ones! The Lord did not throw down the former greatness of the nobility, for you to rise up in their places; but ye should have lain low, and remained little, and have let the Lord been great; and it is your true interest to descend and become little again. And if it were once manifest that ye did not seek yourselves, but the cause of God, the good of his people, and of the nation, that every part and sort of men might feel their oppressions broken, and their just rights and liberties recovered and preserved for them; this would draw the hearts of all the honest-hearted people to you as one man; and those which have been scattered would be again united; and our very enemies (seeing our integrity and righteousness and true reformation by the wisdom and guidance of God) would magnify that work of God, which, as yet, cannot but be a reproach.

Therefore, O England! fear before the Lord, and wait upon him: and let thine eye be taken off from man; for he is very vanity. Neither thy good nor thy harm ariseth this way; but out of thine own bowels. What have all these

afflictions done towards the refining thee? Art thou not yet what thou wast? O England! wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? Murmur not against the rods wherewith the Lord seeth good to chastise thee; but mourn over thy wickedness, thy pride, thy deceit, thy excess, thy cruelty, thy oppression, thy false worship, and idolatries, &c., and over thy enmity against that which is of God, wherever it appears.

At the beginning of these troubles thou couldst bear with no form of worship, but thine own. Now thou art come thus far, that thou canst almost bear with any form. Nay, but that will not serve; the Lord will have room for the power of godliness, and he will not always suffer thee to smite his servants for their obedience to his spirit. This is his controversy with thee, and the cause of all thy misery: when misery, distress, and ruin have opened thine eyes, thou wilt see it. Oh that thy day of calamity might pass over thee! if thou couldst indeed humble thyself before the Lord, and not walk any longer thus contrary to him, in the work which he is resolved to bring about, the Lord might pity and spare thee; for he delighteth in mercy: but if thou continuest to walk contrary to him, and wilt be settled afore his time, and in a way, and by such means, as he approves not, the steps of his power against thee will overturn thee. Therefore fear, and be humble and meek before him; for therein lies the wisdom which can preserve thee: but strive not to withstand his foot-steps, lest he trample down thy crown, thy strength, thy hopes, thy peace, and all that is desirable in thine eyes.

This is in tender love, as a gentle warning to you, that you may take heed of giving way to that fierce spirit, which is the fore-runner of misery and desolation;

From him who is a dear lover of this city, and of his native country,

ISAAC PENINGTON, THE YOUNGER.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Proposed to the distracted nation of England, concerning the present design and work of God therein; upon their submitting whereto doth their settlement alone depend, and not upon any Form of Government, or change of Governors, as that spirit which seeketh their ruin tempteth them to believe.

1. THAT God, in great mercy, broke the bonds of the Romish yoke, which lay hard upon the neck of this nation, and was very weighty upon those consciences wherein the true reforming light did arise in any measure; and who were in any measure true to that light which the Lord caused to break in upon them.

2. That the reformation out of Popery was not presently perfected (nay, was never yet perfected), but was very weak and low, many things therein savoring very much of Popery (the nation being hardly able to bear at that time what was done); so that there were many things still continuing, which could not but be burdensome to the upright-hearted, and to the tender consciences, as the light which began their reformation did grow and increase in them.

3. That the Lord God (who, in such great mercy, had delivered this nation from the yoke of Popery) could not but expect that the reformation should grow and increase until it were perfected; even until nothing was left which arose from that spirit from whence Popery sprang, and which might (in its proper tendency) be serviceable to that spirit; but that all his people in this nation, might have free liberty at least (if not encouragement), to return to the pure worship of him in spirit and in truth; even as in the days of the apostles, before the apostasy from the Spirit and from the Truth.

4. That the reformation out of Popery was not pursued as the Lord expected it should; but a dark way of worship established in the land, and a dark church-government (both like that of Rome); whereby those that were truly conscientious, and in whom the reforming light did further and further arise, were reproached, nick-named, hated, persecuted, &c., insomuch that there was a bar set up against the proceeding of the reformation any further, and a formal way of church-government and worship erected; which was pleasing to the loose and carnal spirit; but sharp, cruel, and burdensome to the stricter sort, and to such as were tender-hearted toward God.

5. That under this church-government and way of worship there was a going backwards towards Popery again, instead of going further from it. Things grew every day worse and worse; ceremonies daily abounding, and were more and more strictly enjoined; wearing of surplices, bowing at the name of Jesus, railing of the communion-tables, and making steps up to them; calling them high altars (bowing thrice at their approach to them) having corporasses over their bread, saying second service, &c. And the chief end of their visitations was to establish such things as these; and to suppress lecturers, and conscientious preachers (among whom some fresh life did spring up, for the relief of the needy and desolate); and to curtail preaching, praying before and after sermons, yea, and catechising too, which by authority was appointed in the place of the afternoon-sermons, when they found it exceed the limits they intended. And this proceeded so far, that there was very little difference between us and the Papists, save only the name; the worship in both becoming dead, and formal, and pleasing to the fleshly part, but empty of that which should feed and refresh the spirit. Only the Lord hath reserved to himself a remnant, who could not bow to these things but groaned under them, and witnessed against them, mourning bitterly to the Lord under the load and weight of them.

6. That when the wrath of the Lord arose against this form of church-government and worship (as indeed it was

high time for the Lord to appear; for the power and life of religion was even expiring), and he brake down all that stood up in the defence of it, and gave much liberty to the oppressed spirits and consciences of his people; yet this was not pleasing to the nation; but fain would they have had either the same form up again, or at least some other such like in the stead of it; whereby the loose spirit of the nation might be settled in some way of formal worship, and the growing reforming light snibbed in the spirits of the tender-hearted towards God.

Look back with a single and honest eye. Hath it not been thus? Hath there not been a sharp contention between God and this nation concerning this thing? The Lord hath risen to remove the yoke from the oppressed, that he might cause the powers of this nation to let the oppressed conscience go free; but the nation would have them bound. It is still crying to the powers and authorities in being to lay the yoke on again. When one power is broken down (because it is not faithful in the Lord's hand, but starts aside from the Lord's work, for which it was chosen, to another of its own choosing), it seeks to have another harder power set up (I mean harder to the tender conscience); yet God overturns that also; and what can stand before him who is risen to shake terribly the earth, and to make the oaks and cedars thereof to fail, totter, and fall? O England! will nothing serve thy turn but the enslaving of God's heritage? That tenderness of conscience which God hath begotten in his people is his own; is that which he will inherit. It is that which he brought out of the Egyptian darkness of Popery, and which he is now redeeming, and delivering out of the relics thereof: and if these three nations should for the generality join together as one man; yea, and though other nations should join with them, yet will they fall short of power and wisdom to prevent the Lord of bringing to pass his intended work.

Was it the generality of the nations God redeemed out of Popery? Or was it a poor, persecuted remnant, for whose sakes he did it, and whom he chiefly had respect unto?

And is not the Lord able to carry on this work further and further? Did he suffer them always to be stopped in their progress, and held in bondage by the powers set up? Nay, did he not at length break them down at their cries, for their sakes? And do ye think he will now suffer the line of Presbytery to be stretched over them, to keep them down from rising up any further in obedience to the pure law of life in their spirits? O England! in the zeal of the Lord of hosts I could bid defiance to all thy counsels and strength, though I should see thee encompass round his poor suffering seed (who are very weak and foolish as to that kind of strength and wisdom), because mine eye seeth the Almighty One (before whom, in thy greatest strength and height of confidence, thou art as nothing) engaged against thee; but I rather choose to mourn over thee, and to wait for the opening of thine eyes, by the anointing of the true eye-salve, which alone can unbewitch the nations. Yea, in bowels of tender love and pity to thee, I do beseech thee, O England! consider thyself; do not undo thy happiness and prosperity; fight not against the Holy One, the Mighty One of despised, distressed Israel; be not tempted to follow Israel into the wilderness (where they now are, and whither the hand of the Lord hath led them), to bring them back again into bondage, because thou seest them entangled in the straits, and nothing appears able to deliver out of thy hand. Remember what befel Pharaoh and all his host. This Israel, whom thou huntest, is dearer to the Lord than ever that Israel was: for that was but a shadow of the true seed; but the true life itself is begotten and brought forth in many of these; and the power and presence of the Lord is mightily with them, and amongst them; though thou, in the unbelief, canst not see it. There is now an hour of temptation upon thee; there appears a fair opportunity to thee to be revenged on them, and bring them under. Take heed what thou doest, lest he, who hath the power over all, bring thee under, and set them on the top. Seek righteousness, seek the good of all, seek true reformation, and the Lord will bless thee: but if thou think to obtain the setting

up of old forms, and ways of worship and government, or any new ones like to the old, under which the righteous cannot but groan (though the wicked and loose spirit may rejoice), thou wilt be deceived, and thy mistake may prove very dangerous and bitter to thee. Our earnest desires to the Lord for thee are, that thou mayest be spared as much as possible (and that the sufferings of God's people, from the very first rent from Popery till this day, may not be laid to thy charge); but iniquity is so twisted into thy bowels, that with much tearing, which will cause great pain to thee, it can hardly be separated from thee. Thou art too wise and wilful; this is the cause of thy sorrow. If thou couldst fear before the Lord, and patiently wait for the revealing of his will, and of his guiding thee by his wisdom, and not be so enraged against instruments, but see through them to his hand (who hath afflicted thee), and humble thyself before that, how sweetly and easily might his work go on in thee! But alas! hast thou not set thyself against it from the very first? And now thou art much pleased with a seeming probability of turning it backward. Ah, poor land! what will this stiff spirit (which hath all along these times of trouble repined at and opposed the work of the Lord) bring thee to?

The time of reformation is come; the work of reformation is begun by that power which is able to carry it on; and that which now standeth in the way thereof (how high and mighty soever) will be overturned. And although (as to what men have done) the cause and work of reformation may justly become a reproach; yet the foundation of reformation which God hath laid is glorious: and in these troublesome times is he rearing up the building of his New Jerusalem, which, when he hath finished and brought forth, will dazzle the eyes of the whole earth. O England! be not high-minded, run not out into parties and breaches, in the heady will; but fear before him whose power is over thee (who comprehends all thy counsels, strength, designs, and hopes, as with a span, and when they are at the height,

can moulder them to nothing with the touch of his finger); for his will must stand, not thine.

Written the 19th of the 11th Month, 1659.

This is from him, whom, in the day of thy distress and bitter calamity (which thy present courses lead apace unto), thou wilt confess to have been thy true friend,

ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

TO THE ARMY.

FRIENDS,

Do ye not see how often ye have been betrayed? The Lord hath done great things for you, and by you, and put great opportunities into your hands: but still they have been lost, his work fallen to the ground, and his name become a reproach over all the earth, through your means. Oh! be abased before the Lord, and lie very low, and consider how justly he may lay you aside from being his instruments, in that great and glorious work he hath to bring to pass. If ye desire to stand, look up to the Lord, to keep your spirits very low, and poor, and meek, and ready to hear. Oh! wait to know what hath betrayed you hitherto! for assuredly that lies in wait to betray you again: and if the Lord mightily preserve you not from it, will make you forget him, and cause you to mind and seek yourselves afresh, so soon as ever your fears are over. Therefore, in the day of your prosperity, the Lord watch over you, and keep you close to the stirrings and honest movings for public good, that have sprung up in your hearts in the days of your adversity; and take heed, lest the subtlety in the wise, fleshly-reasoning part deceive you; but fear the Lord in your reasonings, and beg earnestly of him to keep the simplicity alive in you, that the fleshly wisdom get not mastery over it. For the evil counsellor is near you, even in your

own bosoms, and he lies lurking in plausible and fair-seeming reasonings. Therefore keep close to the simplicity, and let your reasonings be servants to it, and not masters over it. Ah! remember how often ye have started aside like a warped bow: become now at length upright to the Lord, carrying faithfully to the mark those his arrows which he is shooting at the regions of Babylon.

This is from one who waits for what the Lord will effect, and hopes at length to see an instrument in his hand wherein his soul will delight.

ISAAC PENINGTON THE YOUNGER.

A QUESTION

Propounded to the Rulers, Teachers, and People of the Nation of ENGLAND, for them singly to answer in their hearts and consciences, in the fear and dread of the Mighty God of Heaven and Earth; whose mighty Arm of Power is stretched out in this Nation, first to overturn what stands in his way, and then to establish (in the place thereof) what he hath purposed in his heart. And this is the thing which the Lord hath determined to do, both particularly in persons, and generally throughout the Earth; namely, to pull down the Mighty from their Seats, and to exalt the Humble and Meek (who are made such by the Presence and Power of his Life in them), that he alone may be exalted in the Spirits of his People, and throughout the Earth. And this Work hath the Lord begun already; for his great and notable Day hath appeared, and breaketh forth apace, though the eye which is closed cannot see it, nor the benumbed sense feel it. But he that hath an ear, let him hear the sound of the Lord's Trumpet, which saith, in the mighty breath of his Spirit of life, Awake! ye dead, and stand up to judgment;

for the day of Recompense is come, the day of the eternal vengeance of our God, and the day of his everlasting Mercy and plentiful Redemption. The Question is as followeth.

When this nation was rent from Popery (in part I mean: for wholly it was never rent, but did still retain the same spirit; though by the magistrate's sword it was forced from that form and way of worship which the Pope had established) *did it wait on the Lord for the guidance of his spirit and power, thereby to build up a true church and habitation for God in the Spirit? Or did it take such materials as were ready at hand, and frame up a building as well as it could, wherewith the consciences of many (that were tender-hearted towards God) were even then dissatisfied, and felt, in the eternal life of God, the reformation not to be right in its beginning?*

This is a weighty question: for an error at first, an error in the foundation, is great, and the cause of many following errors. If the Spirit of God was not then consulted with, and waited upon; if he did not raise the fabric, surely the building was not right. It was the Spirit of God which rent men from Popery (so far as they acted upon pure and honest principles), showing the blackness and darkness thereof, and kindling desires in them after a more inward and spiritual way of worship. Thus far was of him. But if men did then consult with their own wisdom, for the ordering and carrying on of the reformation, and so upon politic grounds and reasons did raise up a building, and not wait on the Lord for his light and power to build with; then surely that building was not of God, nor could he be honored thereby, nor his truth preserved, nor the integrity and conscientiousness of his people's hearts towards him cherished; but all this would suffer and be in danger by this building, and a contrary spirit be pleased with it, and thrive under it. And hath it not been so? Were not the Non-conformists to it (though known to be precious persons in the savor and life of God) looked upon and dealt with as enemies, while such Conformists as were known to be loose

and scandalous, yet could flourish well enough, and make a fair show in this national church, and be zealous contenders for the way of worship and government in it? Yea, those that have been strict in their lives and conversations, and truly zealous towards God in their souls and spirits, pressing after righteousness and purity; such as these, though they might conform, yet were they not hated, nicknamed, in scorn called Puritans, and snares laid for them to entrap them? And how could it be otherwise? For if the building was not right, if the constitution and government of this church were not of God, then it could not favor and cherish that which was of God, then it could not nourish or be pleased with obedience to his pure life and spirit, but rather with obedience to its carnal form. For so it is in truth and reality before God; this church, with its whole constitution, government, order, and way of worship, was either of God's spirit, and so spiritual; or of man's wisdom, and so carnal. If of God's spirit, then it will be a friend to that which is spiritual, and an enemy to that which is carnal; if of man's wisdom, then it will be a friend to that which is carnal, and an enemy to that which is spiritual. And this is a true mark of the true church, and of the true church power and government; it begets and preserves that which is spiritual, it beats down the carnal; whereas the church power and government which is carnal preserves that which is carnal (a carnal unity, a carnal uniformity in worship, &c.), but checks, snubs, smites, and persecutes that which is spiritual; and for such a kind of power and government to be set up, the carnal part in every man contends and cries out. And so long as there is any change made in this church by the same wisdom, it will never be otherwise; it will be from carnal to carnal, and so still against that which is spiritual. Therefore look back singly, and consider what the building was, and how it was reared up; and see whether it was of God or no: or whether it was built up in the forwardness of man's spirit, by carnal reasonings and consultings, accommodating things

to the present state of the nation, and not to the plain and clear measure of God's truth.

First, See what the materials were whereof this church was built. Were they materials fit to make up a true church of? Was it built up of a people truly converted to God? Of persons changed in heart? Of persons sensible of the foregoing idolatry, and turned in their souls, minds, and spirits from dead idols towards the living God? Or was not rather the heart of the nation still inclined towards Popery, even while it was turning into a Protestant church? And was it not chiefly made a Protestant church by the force of the civil power, which wound in by degrees a Protestant interest; the heart of the people still remaining unchanged, and hankering after Popery; but at length, in tract of time, seeing they knew not how to help it, won over to Protestantism with the same heart and spirit that they came out of Popery with? Consider seriously in the sight of God (who looketh both forward and backward upon things with a true eye), whether it hath been thus or no?

Secondly, See what kind of ministry was then set up. Was it a new ministry (as John Huss, that famous Bohemian martyr, prophesied should arise, and as Luther saw the necessity of, utterly disclaiming the deriving of orders from Popish bishops)? or was it the same ministry which was derived from Rome? It is a sore stress the ministers of England have been put to; namely, to plead for the truth of the ministry of the church of Rome, that thereby they might defend their own. Now mark this thing following; there arose false apostles, false prophets, false teachers in the apostles' days; whom Satan clothed like true apostles, like true prophets, like *ministers of righteousness*. Thus they appeared, thus they seemed to be; but they were not of God, but Satan; not sent of God, not inspired by God; but inspired and sent by Satan. These false apostles, these false prophets, fought against the true church, and true ministry of Christ. And though they were oftentimes discovered, by the spirit of Christ in his church, and the church preserved from them, yet we find related in Scriptures, that at

length they did prevail, insomuch as the third part of the true ministers were shaken, and swept down from their place and standing by them, Rev. xii. 4. yea, and at length the church herself (as to the truth of her outward state) overcome, and fled into the wilderness, ver. 6, 14. and a false church got up in her stead, which hath a cup of fornication to make people spiritually drunk; and to bewitch them from the true worship of God, into imitations and likenesses, Rev. xvii. 4. and those who will not acknowledge her likenesses and imitations to be the truth, but, in the word of the Lamb's testimony, witness against them, she drinks their blood. ver. 6. Now can any man of any manner of seriousness and sobriety of spirit (who is not drunk and overcome with this whore's wine) believe, that after false prophets had got the day, and set up the false church, that they would set up the true ministry in it? Oh, how blind have men been, that they should go about, and take such pains, to derive a succession of the true ministry from the ministers or prophets of the false church!

Thirdly, What kind of maintenance was set up for this ministry? Was it a gospel maintenance? Was it that they should live of the gospel, which cannot but open men's spirits to the true ministers thereof? Or was it a maintenance forced from the people, by that outward power which set up the church? And was this maintenance like unto, or the same with, the maintenance which the Popish ministry had before in this nation, for their idolatrous service?

Fourthly, What kind of worship was it, which was set up? Was it the worship of the gospel, which is in spirit and truth? Or was it a form of worship invented by man, and so accommodated to the present temper of the nation, that they might, with the more ease and willingness, step out of Popery into it, because of its nearness and likeness thereto?

Fifthly, What kind of church-government was set up? Was it a pure, spiritual government? Was it put into the hands of the Spirit? (For nothing is to govern, or can rightly govern over the spirits of Christ's people, in spiritual things,

but the spirit of Christ.) Or did men frame up a church-government by their wisdom, and put it into the hands of such as might exercise it without, yea, and against, the Spirit?

Sixthly, What kind of order was set up in this church? Was it the true, gospel order? Was it the order of Christ's spirit, whereby the carnal wisdom of man might be quenched, and his spirit have scope? Or was it a carnal order, whereby the carnal wisdom, learning, knowledge, and arts of man might have scope, and the spirit in its motions be quenched?

Seventhly, By what wisdom was the common prayer-book compiled and set up; and surplices, crosses, and other ceremonies enjoined? Was it by the wisdom of God's spirit, for the building up of the spirits of his people in the faith? Or was it for the pleasing and satisfying of the carnal part in people? And what sort of persons were they who did most contend for, and were most pleased with, these? Were they, for the generality, the stricter, or the looser sort?

Eighthly, How came it about, that the supreme magistrate of this nation was made chief head and governor of this church under Christ? Was this from Christ's institution, or of man's wisdom and invention? If of man's inventing wisdom, then against Christ, then of antichrist's spirit, who exalteth that which is not of Christ, to sit and govern in his temple.

Oh! weigh these things, look about thee, O England! O rulers, teachers, and people look about you! And if it plainly (upon a naked search) appear that there was, at the very first, a foundation laid of suppressing the true worship, and the witnesses to it, do not shut your eyes. Have not the people of God still been misrepresented, had reproachful names cast upon them, and, in some degree or other, been persecuted from the beginning of the reformation? And though names change, and rulers change, and the teachers change, and the people also change in their religion and worships, yet is not the persecuting spirit still the same, and the persecuted spirit still the same also? The

persecuting spirit changeth its cover often, but still retains its nature, hunting after the life and pure power of the spirit, in the children which are begotten of God. Are not the people of God in every change a despised people, and their integrity towards God still struck at? When the Lord began a little to wipe off the reproach from them, at the beginning of these troubles, and the persecuting spirit could not so conveniently hunt them any longer under the name of Puritans, then other names were invented for them, whereby the same spirit sought to make them appear odious again, under a new reproachful title, that so it might be persecuting the same thing afresh. Oh, how mightily hath the Lord striven to keep the powers and people of this nation from falling upon his people! and yet still, so soon as they come to any peace, and feeling of power, they are at it again. O England! thy persisting in this cannot but bring wrath upon thee. What wouldst thou have of us? Shall we not fear the Lord? Shall we not obey the Lord? Shall we not worship the Lord our God, who hath redeemed, and is redeeming, our souls from death? Shall we not be Protestants in truth and uprightness of heart before the Lord? Shall we not testify against the Popish spirit, and Popish practices, and all new inventions of the same spirit (though they get ever so fine a covering) in the church of England, as well as against them in the church of Rome?

The Lord is our witness, we would not offend thee, O England! no, not the meanest persons of the whole nation: but from out of Popery we are called (and from whatever else the same nature and spirit may take up in the stead of it), to follow the Lord our God towards the land of the living; and follow him we must, however thou deal with us. O England! if it had been so that thy rulers had built up a true church, yet the evil spirit, the unclean spirit, would have endeavored to pollute it, to provoke the Lord to remove his candlestick (which is an inward act of his spirit, the outward building might stand notwithstanding), and then thy house must have been left desolate, and the same spirit would then have called his people out of it. But if thy build-

but the spirit of Christ.) Or [illegible] the spirit, how can the government by their wisd[illegible] begotten by him to lodge such as might exerci[illegible] an ear to hear, that the Lord's Spirit? [illegible] thee; which kindleth more and

Sixthly, What [illegible] within thy bowels! This, this Was it the true [illegible] against thee: *Thou art for the Protestant* spirit, where[illegible] thy interest, and a goodly covering in quenched, [illegible] *the Protestant spirit;* which the Lord cal- order, wh[illegible] further and further from all the things of arts of [illegible] all the things like Popery. And the Lord be que[illegible] difference between the Protestant name and the

Se[illegible] spirit; between them that serve him in the fear cor[illegible] begets in the heart, and them that set up that kind [illegible] which is taught by the precepts of men.

O England! we are now seemingly in thy hands (who hast long handled us very roughly); and we have no strength against thee, nor no hope of deliverance from thee, but in the Lord our God; and there we are at rest, waiting upon him, in the innocency and integrity which he hath begotten in our hearts, until he plead our cause. And in that day thou wilt see that we have not been thine enemies, and then thou wilt mourn over that mist of darkness, which hath withheld thine eye from discerning what true friends we have been to thee, and how we have endeavored, and sought with our hearts to prevent thy drinking of that bitter cup, which is to go round the nations. And if thine ear could have been opened, thou mighest have been spared.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE gospel is free; the grace and mercy thereof free; the spirit a free spirit (freely given of God, and freely ministering for God); the church a spiritual building, built in the freedom and liberty of the life of the spirit; the order and government of the church is from and in the same free spirit, guiding a people whom God makes willing in the day of his power; the maintenance of the ministry a free maintenance; the whole obedience and worship free, in the free spirit, and

e truth which is begotten in the heart by the free spirit. ·ead of this church is Christ, the living Spirit, who hath 'ed none to be head under him here on earth, nor en power to any to make any laws concerning his om, or the government thereof; concerning his min- y, or the maintenance thereof. (Is it not thus? Doth not ne least child of light see it to be thus?) But the church of England was a church built by force; settled by force; her ministers maintained by force: her order, unity, uniformity, and government, forcible; and the free, pure spirit of life can have no scope in her, but according to the wills of her rulers, teachers, and people: if it move otherwise, if it appear otherwise, it is sure to be nick-named and persecuted. O England! England! can God always suffer these things? Will not his hand at length be stretched forth against thee?

Given forth by ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger, in the fear and dread of the Most High, the 14th of the 12th Month, 1659.

REMARK.

"THE day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." 1 Thes. v. 2, 3. And when the Lord cometh, woe to him who is found beating his fellow-servant, and endeavoring to force the conscience (which God hath made tender and pliable to the voice of his spirit) from its obedience and subjection thereto.

ing hath not been spiritual, and in the spirit, how can the spirit of the Lord suffer the children begotten by him to lodge in it! Oh, when wilt thou have an ear to hear, that the Lord's wrath may assuage towards thee; which kindleth more and more, and is entering apace within thy bowels! This, this is the Lord's charge against thee: *Thou art for the Protestant name* (it is now become thy interest, and a goodly covering in thy eyes) *but against the Protestant spirit;* which the Lord calleth to follow him further and further from all the things of Popery, and from all the things like Popery. And the Lord will put a difference between the Protestant name and the Protestant spirit; between them that serve him in the fear which he begets in the heart, and them that set up that kind of fear which is taught by the precepts of men.

O England! we are now seemingly in thy hands (who hast long handled us very roughly); and we have no strength against thee, nor no hope of deliverance from thee, but in the Lord our God; and there we are at rest, waiting upon him, in the innocency and integrity which he hath begotten in our hearts, until he plead our cause. And in that day thou wilt see that we have not been thine enemies, and then thou wilt mourn over that mist of darkness, which hath withheld thine eye from discerning what true friends we have been to thee, and how we have endeavored, and sought with our hearts to prevent thy drinking of that bitter cup, which is to go round the nations. And if thine ear could have been opened, thou mighest have been spared.

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[redacted]

AN

EXAMINATION

OF THE

GROUNDS OR CAUSES

WHICH ARE SAID TO INDUCE THE

COURT OF BOSTON, IN NEW ENGLAND,

TO MAKE THAT ORDER OR LAW OF BANISHMENT, UPON PAIN OF DEATH, AGAINST THE QUAKERS.

AS ALSO

OF THE GROUNDS AND CONSIDERATIONS BY THEM PRODUCED, TO MANIFEST THE WARRANTABLENESS AND JUSTNESS BOTH OF THEIR MAKING AND EXECUTING THE SAME; WHICH THEY NOW STAND DEEPLY ENGAGED TO DEFEND, HAVING ALREADY THEREUPON PUT TWO OF THEM TO DEATH.

AS ALSO

OF SOME FURTHER GROUNDS FOR JUSTIFYING OF THE SAME, IN AN APPENDIX TO JOHN NORTON'S BOOK (WHICH WAS PRINTED AFTER THE BOOK ITSELF, YET AS PART THEREOF); WHERETO HE IS SAID TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GENERAL COURT.

And likewise of the Arguments briefly hinted, in that which is called, "A true Relation of the Proceedings against the Quakers, &c."

Whereunto somewhat is added about the Authority and Government Christ excluded out of his Church; which occasioneth somewhat concerning the true Church-Government.

BY ISAAC PENINGTON, THE YOUNGER.

The stone the builders refused, is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. Ps. cxviii. 22, 23.

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. Mat. xi. 25, 26.

TO THE

RULERS, TEACHERS, AND PEOPLE

OF

New England.

MANY a weary step hath my poor soul fetched, and many difficulties and hardships hath it met with in its pursuit after truth. The immortal seed hath deeply suffered in me through the mists of darkness, and various stratagems and powers of the enemy, which have often encompassed me, and distressed my spirit exceedingly. I have known many battles, received deep wounds; yea, and have been in deaths and graves often, where the living seed hath languished for want of the living spring. Yet this thing, to the praise and glory of the Preserver of Israel, may I speak; the sense of God, and the savor of his spirit, were never wholly taken away from me; though many times I knew it not, but was too apt to distrust it, being ignorant of the way of its appearing in me. The Scriptures I always exceedingly prized, and a deep knowledge of them, from an experimental sense of the things they spake of, was bestowed on me: but I knew not what it was which gave me the knowledge, nor how it sprang; but went about still to fix it in the letter, and so gave away the glory from the spirit, which shines above and beyond the letter, and ought so to be acknowledge.

Before this despised people appeared, I was even quite worn out, and said, My hope is cut off from the Lord; there is no such appearance of him to be looked for as my poor distressed soul wants. Live without the presence of his spirit I could not; where to meet with his spirit I could hear no news; and that precious knowledge which I had through the operation of God upon my heart from the liv-

ing spring; the same hand which gave me, also break in pieces, and pulled down that inward building which was reared up in my spirit.

What a man of sorrows I became hereupon, how I mourned all the day long, and roared out after my God all the night-season, is not to be uttered. And if it might be the Lord's pleasure, oh that my misery might end with me, and that this might be the issue of all my sufferings, to fit me to be a faithful instrument in the hand of the Lord for the preserving of others therefrom!

Now this was it which undid me; namely, the getting up of the fleshly wisdom and understanding; which, though God had broken in me mightily several times, yet it still had some secret device or other to creep in again into me, and to twine about my spirit, undiscerned by me: but this effect still attended it; by degrees, like a canker, it eat out the sweetness and freshness of my life and spirit, and exalted that part in me which God hides the mysteries of his kingdom from.

At first acquaintance with this rejected people, that which was eternal of God in me opened, and I did immediately in my spirit own them as children of my Father, truly begotten of his life by his own spirit; but the wise, reasoning part presently rose up, contending against their uncouth way of appearance, and in that I did disown them, and continued a stranger to them, and a reasoner against them, for above twelve months; and by weighing and considering things in that part, was still further and further off from discerning their leadings by the life and spirit of God into those things. But at length it pleased the Lord to draw out his sword against that part in me, turning the wisdom and strength thereof backward, and to open that eye in me again, wherewith he had given me to see the things of his kingdom in some measure from a child; and then I saw and felt them grown in that life and spirit, which I, through the treachery of the fleshly-wise part, had been estranged to, and had adulterated from. And now what bitter days of mourning and lamentation (even for some years

since) I have had over this, the Lord alone fully knows. Oh! I have known it to be a bitter thing to follow this wisdom in understanding of scriptures, in remembering of scriptures, in remembering of experiences, and in many more inward ways of workings, that many cannot bear to hear. The Lord hath judged me for that, and I have borne the burden and condemnation of that, which many at this day wear as their crown. And now what am I at length? A poor worm! Whom can I warn effectually? Whom can I help? Whom can I stop from running into the pit? But though I am nothing, I must speak; for the Lord draweth and moveth me: and how unserviceable soever my pity be, yet my bowels cannot but roll, both towards those that are in misery, and those that are running into misery.

Read in the fear, and in simplicity, what was so written; and the Lord open that eye in you which can see the way of life, and discover the paths of the mystery of iniquity in its most hidden workings in the heart; that ye sleep not the sleep of eternal death, and so at last be awakened in the bowels of that wrath and fiery indignation, which that spirit which erreth from, and transgresseth, the life and light within, can neither bear nor escape.

AN

EXAMINATION

OF THE

Grounds or Causes, &c.

THAT in New England there hath been a law made of banishing the Quakers, so called, and of death in case of return, is well known in these parts; but what induced them hereunto, and what just grounds and reasons they had for it, many are not acquainted with, but are very much dissat-

isfied concerning their proceedings therein; fearing that they have dishonored God, brought a reproach upon the name of Christ and his gospel, exceeded the limits of their power, given an ill example of persecution, laid a foundation of hardening their hearts against God, and of drawing his heavy wrath upon them; all which they cannot but be guilty of, in case it should be proved that they have been mistaken, and that these people (upon a further search) should appear to them to be of God, as they have already to very many, who have been exceedingly prejudiced against them, till they came more meekly to hear and consider their case. For there are many here in Old England, and in other parts, who once reviled, reproached, and thought they could hardly do bad enough against them; who now, in the singleness of their hearts, can bless God for raising up such a people, and that they themselves were not cut off in their blind zeal against them; but, in the rich mercy of God, had a way made for the removing of their prejudices and hard thoughts, and for the opening of their eyes, whereby they came to see that these are, indeed, a precious people of God; begotten, brought forth, and guided by his power; and that it is his living truth, which they (in obedience to his living power) are drawn to bear witness to, and to hold forth unto the world. And one such testimony for them is of more weight and value in a true balance, than thousands of testimonies against them from such who are prejudiced, and have not patience to consider things in equity and uprightness of heart, and also whose interest lies another way.

Now meeting of late with a paper beginning thus: *At a general court held at Boston the 8th of October*, 1659. (wherein, by way of preface, there is first an account given of what induced them to make this law of banishment and death, and then grounds and considerations laid down to clear it to be warrantable and just), it was upon my heart to consider and examine these, to see whether they did arise from the seed of God, and from the true knowledge of the Scriptures by his Spirit, and so were weighty to the conscience which singly waits upon God for satisfaction about truth;

or whether they did arise from the fleshly part, and from fleshly reasonings upon Scriptures, and so were but chaffy, and not able to satisfy the weighty, considering spirit, as in the sight of God.

And this I was the more induced to do, because I found bowels rolling towards them, and a sense of what might easily be their snare, which hath overtaken and entangled many: for many who have blamed others severely, and really thought how well they themselves would have amended things, if ever they came into place and power, yet have failed, and run into the very same error, when they have come to the trial. So these persons, when they were formerly persecuted in England, no doubt thought and intended, if ever they came to be free from it, to lay a foundation against it: yet when they came to the point, and felt their condition changed, insomuch as it was now in their hand to determine what was the way of worship, church-government, and order, there lay a great temptation before them to set up what they judged to be right, and to force all others to a conformity to it. Yea, now was their great danger, and time to beware, lest the same persecuting spirit did get up in them, which their being persecuted was a proper means to keep down: and if so (if the same spirit which persecuted them got up in them), then they who were once persecuted could not possibly forbear persecuting; for that spirit will persecute wherever it gets up. And having laid its foundation of persecution under a plausible cover, then by degrees it more and more veils the eye, hardens the heart, and takes away the tenderness which was in the persons before, while they themselves were persecuted. Now I cannot but pity those that fall into the snare of the enemy; especially those who are taken in so great a snare, and come to so great a loss of their tenderness towards God, his truths, and people, and run so great a hazard and danger of the loss of their own souls.

The Grounds or Causes expressed of their making that Law of Banishment, are in Substance these three.

1. THE *coming of the* QUAKERS *from foreign parts, and from other colonies, at sundry times, and in several companies and numbers, into the jurisdiction of Massachusetts.*

Ans. This, of itself, is far from any warrant; for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." And though they claim a propriety in it, yet it is still more the Lord's than theirs; and he may send any one of his servants into it at his pleasure, upon what message or service it seemeth good unto him. So that the great question to be determined here is this: *Whether these persons came from the Lord, in his will, and at his appointment; or whether they came of themselves, and in their own wills.* For if they came by commission and appointment from the Lord of heaven and earth, their warrant was without doubt sufficient. But if they came in their own will, and upon their own designs, then they went out of the Lord's counsel and protection, and must bear their own burden. Now consider whether ye were tender in the due weighing of this, before your imprisoning and dealing hardly with them. For if, at their first coming, ye imprisoned them, and engaged yourselves against them, ye thereby made yourselves unfit for an equal consideration of the cause; and God might justly then leave your eyes to be closed, and your hearts hardened against his truths and people, for beginning with them so harshly and unrighteously, and not in his fear.

2. *Those lesser punishments of the house of correction, and imprisonment for a time, having been inflicted on some of them; but not sufficing to deter and keep them away.* Why do ye omit cutting off of ears? Are ye ashamed to mention that amongst the rest? Indeed the remembrance of it strikes upon the spirits of people here, and perhaps in New England also.

Ans. They that are sent by the Lord, and go in the guidance of his spirit, cannot be deterred from obedience to him

in his service and work, either by lesser or greater punishments. Punishments deter the evil-doer; but he that doeth well is not afraid of being punished; but is taught, and made willing, and enabled to suffer for righteousness' sake. Phil. 1. 29. And ye will find your greater punishments as ineffectual to obtain your end, as your lesser. For they whose lives (in the power of God) are sacrificed up to the will of God, are no more afraid of death, than they are of whips, prisons, cruel usage in prisons, and cutting off of ears. Surely it had been a sweeter, a more Christian and safer course, to have weighed the thing in God's fear and dread, before ye had begun any of your punishments. But your own late relation confesseth, that ye began with them upon reports from Barbadoes and England, from good hands, ye say; and so they of Damascus might have said, if they had received the letters from the high-priest, or relations from zealous and devout Jews. And I have heard related from many hands (which, having drunk in prejudices from reports, and begun with imprisoning of them, might easily follow) that they were never afforded a fair hearing; but at your courts, questions were put to entrap them, and they not suffered to plead the righteousness and innocency of their cause, but endeavors used to draw them to that (and a watching to catch that from them) which would bring them within the compass of some of your laws. Your consciences know how true these things are, and will one day give in a clear and true testimony, although ye should be able to bribe them at present.

3. *That their coming thither was upon no other grounds or occasion, for aught that could appear, than to scatter their corrupt opinions, and to draw others to their way, and so to make disturbance.*

Ans. Christ saith to his disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world:" and they are not to lie still, and keep their light under a bushel; but to lighten and season the world, as the Lord calleth and guideth them. And if the Lord doth see that New England, notwithstanding all its profession and talk of the things of God, hath

need of his salt to savor it with, and of his light to enlighten them with, and so sendeth his messengers and servants among them, they have no reason to be offended with the Lord for this, or with his people, or with the truths they bring. They have long had a form up, and it may have eaten out the power, that they may not be so savory now in their ease and authority in New England, as they were under their troubles and persecutions in Old England: and God may, in kindness to them, send among them a foolish people to stir them up and provoke them to jealousy. Now their coming thus is not to "scatter corrupt opinions;" but, by the power of truth, to scatter that which scatters from the Lord. Nor is it to draw to their way, but to the Lord, to Christ, his living way; which they are exhorted to try, and feel, and certainly to know, before they receive. Nor doth it make any "disturbance," but only to that which is at ease in the flesh, and fleshly forms of worship. And Israel of old was often thus disturbed by the prophets of God (though they still could not bear it, but were enemies to the prophets for it), notwithstanding they had received their way of worship certainly from God's hand. How much more may the Lord take liberty, by his servants and messengers, to disturb these who never so received it, but have formed up a way out of the Scriptures, whereof many that are truly conscientious, doubt whether it be the way or no; even as they themselves doubt, and are ready to contend against, the ways that others have formed!

Now those that pick a quarrel with truth, and seek matter against it to persecute it, do not call it truth, but error, corrupt opinions, the way of a sect, the making of disturbance, or such like. And persecutors, for the most part, do not only say this, but bring forth their strong arguments; insomuch as the persecutor is commonly just in his own eyes, and the persecuted is blamed as the evil-doer, and cause of his own sufferings. Were the bishops without their plea! Nay, did not he that was called Dr. Burgess (in his book) seem to carry the cause clear against the Non-conformists? And why the bishops might not establish their way by authority,

or the Presbyters their way, as well as those accounted Independents their way (not regarding the Dissenters, or tender-conscienced), I confess I see not; but that they have justified the bishops by their practising the same thing, and so unjustly condemned them in words.

But how can ye say, "for aught that could appear"? when ye were so unfit (through receiving of prejudices and reports, and beginning so roughly with them) to consider what might be made appear, and also so far from giving way to them to make what they could appear, as is before expressed? And doth not this also imply that there may be a just, righteous, and warrantable cause of their coming, in relation to God and his service, though it doth not yet appear to you? And in a meeker and cooler temper, when another eye is opened in you, ye may see and acknowledge that cause, who are the Lord's servants; whether they come in his name or no; whether they are his truths or no, which they bring with them. These are things God opens to the humble, to the meek, to such as fear before him, and wait for his counsel therein; but those that can determine things by intelligence before-hand from other parts, and imprison persons as soon as they come, and so proceed on with a stiff resolution against them, how are these in any capacity to seek or receive counsel from God in a case of so great concernment? So that at last, even when they have drunk their blood, they must be forced to say, "for aught that could appear," this was their only end, work, and intent; but whether it was so or not, they do not certainly know.

Thus far is in answer to the account they give, by way of preface, to what led them to the making of this law of banishment and death. Now the grounds and considerations themselves, which they held forth to clear this to be warrantable and just, follow to be scanned, which are in number six.

1. *The doctrine of this sect of people* (say they) *is destructive to fundamental truths of religion.*

Ans. For the making of this argument forcible, two

things are necessary; if either of which fails, it falls to the ground.

1. It is necessary to make manifest, that persons, for holding or propagating doctrines contrary to fundamental truths of religion, are, by Christ's institution, punishable with dismembering, banishment, or death. For Christ is the head, king, and law-giver to his church: it is he that is the foundation of religion, and the giver-forth of fundamental truths of religion: and he is the proper judge of what punishment is fit for such as either will not receive his fundamental truths of religion, or afterwards start back from them, and broach doctrines contrary thereto. Now it is required (in his name and authority) of such powers as will take upon them to inflict these kinds of punishments upon such kind of offenders, Christ's institution for this thing. Christ was as faithful in his house as Moses, and if such a course had been necessary for the preservation of his church, surely he would not have withheld it. But Christ overcomes the devil's kingdom by his spirit: by that he wins souls, and gathers into, and builds up, his church; and by that he is able to defend them. By his spirit he preacheth the truth, and soweth the seed of the kingdom; and by his spirit he upholds and maintains it. This is his way of overcoming all the mists of darkness and false doctrines, and not a magistrate's sword. "The weapons of our warfare (saith the apostle) are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds." 2 Cor. x. 4. Are there strong-holds of darkness? Are there false doctrines broached against the truths of Christ? Who are the warriors against these? Are they the civil state, the magistrate, the earthly powers? or are they the ministers and servants of Christ? And what are the weapons that are mighty to overthrow these? Are they stocks, whips, prisons, cutting off of ears, banishment, death? or are they of a spiritual nature? The spiritual weapons are sanctified by God to this end, and are mighty through him, able to effect it thoroughly: whereas the carnal weapons are weak and unsanctified, and can reach only the carnal part; but the strong-hold remains untouched

by these. And it is only the carnal part which desires to have the use of such carnal weapons in the church: the spiritual man would conquer by his own weapon, or not at all. Christ came not to destroy men's lives, nor never gave order to have men killed about his truths. If his people be disobedient, and broach doctrines ever so contrary and destructive to his kingdom, he hath a spiritual way of fighting with them now, and hath appointed his servants to have his mighty spiritual weapons in a readiness *for the revenging every disobedience.* 2 Cor. x. 6. And he hath likewise a time of dealing with them hereafter; but he hath nowhere appointed that his subjects (if they could get the command of the sword in a nation or country) should kill such. Abundance of blood hath been shed upon this pretence, which the Lord will make inquisition for: it should at length be seriously inquired into, what truth there is in this bloody doctrine. For, under this cover, all the persecutions and sheddings of the saints' blood shelter themselves. Oh! consider at length, how cruel and bloody, men have made the gospel of peace by this principle; and what an advantage it gives to the carnal part in those that are persecuted, if once they can get the command of the outward sword, to forget their own sufferings, and suddenly turn persecutors of such as differ from them, though upon as weighty grounds (if not more weighty) than they differed from others upon. But this they that are uppermost will not yield to, that the grounds of such as differ from them are sufficient; even as those that they differed from would not yield that their grounds were sufficient. Thus still they whose arguments go forth under the shelter, or by the command of, the present authority, are looked upon as most weighty; and the others' cause is trampled upon, though ever so just, innocent, upright, and weighty in itself; and the meek of the earth, the humble-hearted, the tender-conscienced towards God, are still made the offenders and sufferers: and their enemies are still made their judges. I do think these of New England would have once thought it hard measure, that Conformists, whom they differed from, should have

been the judges, whether their grounds were sufficient or not; and yet they (ever since they have had the power in their hands) have taken upon them to be the judges of the sufficiency of the grounds of such as differ from them, and have as freely condemned all that differed from them, and been as sore a curb upon the tender conscience, as ever the bishops were. So that it is plain, that which they sought was their own liberty (they did not like to be oppressed and enthralled contrary to their judgments), but not the liberty of the tender conscience towards God, but rather the yoking and enthralling of it to their judgments and arguments and interpretations of scripture, which he that differs from, must be an offender with them, even as they were once accounted offenders for differing from the Conformists; and so are all become transgressors of the law of God, in doing that to others, which they would not that others should do to them.

2. It is requisite also to make manifest, that the doctrine of this sort of people is destructive to the fundamental truths of religion. For if it be not so, then they are injured and misrepresented; and both their banishment and death, and all other punishments inflicted upon them on this account, will prove to have been unjust.

There are four instances given, or four particular fundamentals mentioned, to which their doctrines are said to be destructive. First, *The Sacred Trinity*. Secondly, *The person of Christ*. Thirdly, *The Holy Scriptures, as a perfect rule of faith and life*. Fourthly, *The doctrine of perfection*.

Now for the making the thing clear and manifest to every sober mind, it is requisite first to consider what the QUAKERS hold in these several particulars; and then whether that which they hold in these respects be contrary to the truth of these things, as they are plainly related in the Scriptures: for if that which they hold be according to the naked voice and proper intent of the Scriptures, then they are not to be blamed; but the blame will light on their accusers, who might easily be found guilty of injuring both them and the

Scriptures, both in these and many other things, were they not judges.

1. Concerning the *Sacred Trinity*. They generally, both in their speakings and in their writings, set their seal to the truth of that scripture, 1 John v. 5. that "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit." That these three are distinct, as three several beings or persons: this they read not; but in the same place they read, that "they are one." And thus they believe their being to be one, their life one, their light one, their wisdom one, their power one: and he that knoweth and seeth any one of them, knoweth and seeth them all, according to that saying of Christ's to Philip, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." John xiv. 9. Three there are, and yet one; thus they have read in the Scriptures, and this they testify they have had truly opened to them by that very Spirit which gave forth the Scriptures, insomuch that they certainly know it to be true, and own the thing from their very hearts: but as for this title of *Sacred Trinity*, they find it not in Scripture; and they look upon scripture-words as fittest to express scripture things by. And surely if a man mean the same thing as the scripture means, the same words will suffice to express it: but the Papists and school-men having missed of the thing which the scripture drives at, and apprehended somewhat else in the wise, imagining part, have brought forth many phrases of their own invention to express their apprehensions by, which we confess we have no unity with; but are content with feeling the thing which the scripture speaks of, and with the words whereby the Scriptures express it. Now whereas they call this a fundamental, we do not find it so called in scripture; nor do we find the disciples themselves understanding therein, but knew not the Father. John xiv. 8, 9. And Christ going about to inform them, does not tell them of another distinct being or person: but "hast thou not seen me? And believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" ver. 10. And so the believers at Ephesus had not so much as heard there was a Holy Ghost.

Acts xix. 2. So that if ye will make this a fundamental truth, yet it is such a fundamental as true faith did stand without, both in believers before Christ's death, and in believers after. This is the great fundamental, "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," 1 John i. 5. and the great work of the ministry is to show men where this light is, and to turn men from the darkness, wherein is the power of Satan, unto this light, wherein is the power of God. Acts xxvi. 18. And he that comes into this light, and into this power, is owned in the light and in the power, wherein is the life of all the saints, and the true fellowship both with the Father and the Son, and one with another. John i. 3, 7. And the true trial of spirits is not by an assent to doctrines (which the hypocrite may assent to on the one hand, and the true believer may startle at on the other hand); but by feeling of them in the inward virtue of the light, in the spirit, and in the power. This was the apostle's way of trial. 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. "I will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power; for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." A man may speak high words concerning the kingdom, and get all the doctrines about it, and yet be a stranger to it, and quite ignorant of the power: and another may want divers doctrines concerning it (perhaps some of those which men call fundamentals), and yet be a citizen of it, and in the power. But now, under the antichristian apostasy, men wanting the feeling of the life and power, wherein the true judgment is, they own or disown one another upon an assent or dissent to such and such doctrines, and so fall into this great error of disowning many whom Christ owns: and if they find persons not assent to, or dissenting from, any of those things which they call fundamentals, then they think they may lawfully excommunicate and persecute them. So, by this mistake, they cut off that which is green, they persecute that wherein is the living sap, and cherish the dry and withered. That which is most tender towards God, and most growing in the inward sensibleness (which causeth it

to startle at that which others can easily swallow) lies most open to suffering by this kind of trial.

2. Concerning *the Person of Christ.* They believe that Christ is the eternal light, life, wisdom and power of God, which was manifested in that body of flesh which he took of the virgin: that he is the king, priest, and prophet of his people, and saveth them from their sins, by laying down his life for them, and imputing his righteousness to them; yet not without revealing and bringing forth the same righteousness in them, which he wrought for them. And by experience they know, that there is no being saved by a belief of his death for them, and of his resurrection, ascension, intercession, &c., without being brought into a true fellowship with him in his death, and without feeling his immortal seed of life raised and living in them. And so they disown the faith in Christ's death, which is only received and entertained from the relation of the letter of the Scriptures, and stands not in the divine power, and sensible experience of the begotten of God in the heart.

Now they distinguish, according to the Scriptures, between that which is called the Christ, and the bodily garment which he took. The one was flesh, the other spirit. "The flesh profiteth nothing (saith he), the spirit quickeneth; and he that eateth me, shall live by me, even as I live by the Father." John vi. 57, 63. This is the manna itself, the true treasure; the other, but the visible or earthen vessel which held it. The body of flesh was but the veil. Heb. x. 20. The eternal life was the substance veiled. The one he did partake of, as the rest of the children did; the other was he which did partake thereof. Heb. ii. 14. The one was the body which was prepared for the life, for it to appear in, and be made manifest. Heb. x. 5. The other was the life, or light itself, for whom the body was prepared, who took it up, appeared in it to do the will, Ps. xl. 7, 8. and was made manifest to those eyes which were able to see through the veil wherewith it was covered. John i. 14.

Now is not this sound according to the Scriptures? And is it not a good way to know this by unity with it, by feeling

a measure of the same life made manifest in our mortal flesh? 2 Cor. iv. 11. This we confess is our way of understanding things; and likewise of understanding the Scriptures, which speak of these things. And we have found it a far surer kind of knowledge; namely, to understand the Scriptures by experience of that whereof the scripture speaks, than to guess at the things the scripture speaks of, by considering and scanning in the earthly part what the Scriptures speak of them. Such a kind of knowledge as this, a wise man may attain to a great measure of; but the other is peculiar to him who is begotten of God, whose knowledge is true and certain, though it seem ever so different from his who hath attained what he hath by the search of his wisdom.

8. Concerning *the holy Scriptures being a perfect rule of faith and life.* The new covenant is the covenant of the gospel; which is a living covenant, a spiritual covenant, an inward covenant, and the law or rule of it cannot be written outwardly. Read the tenor of the new covenant, Heb. viii. 10. "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts." If God himself should take the same laws, and write them outwardly; yet, so written, they are not the new covenant: at most they would be but an outward draught of laws written in the new covenant. And mark; this is one difference given between the new covenant and the old; the laws of the one were written outwardly, in tables of stone; the laws of the other were to be written in the heart. That is the book wherein the laws of the new covenant were promised to be written, and there they are to be read. So that he that will read and obey the laws of the covenant of life, must look for them in that book wherein God hath promised to write them; for though in other books he may read some outward descriptions of the thing, yet here alone can he read the thing itself. "Christ is the way, the truth, and the life." What is a Christian's rule? Is not the way of God his rule? Is not God's truth his rule? And is not the truth in Jesus; where it is taught and to be heard, and to be received even as it is in Jesus?

Ephes. iv. 22. Is not he the king, the priest, the prophet, the sacrifice, the way to God, the life itself, the living path out of death; yea, all in all to the believer, whose eye is opened to behold him? The Scriptures testify of Christ, but they are not Christ; they also testify of truth, and are a true testimony; but the truth itself is in Jesus, who by his living spirit writes it in the heart which he hath made living. And so a Christian's life is in the spirit: "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit." Gal. v. 25. The whole life and course of a Christian is in the volume of that book, as the Lord opens the leaves of it in him. "The gift of God, the measure of faith" given him by God, that is his rule; that is his rule of knowledge, of prophesying, of obedience. Heb. xii. Rom. i. 4. xii. 6. If he keep there, if he walk according to the proportion of it, he errs not: but out of the faith, inthe error, in all he knows, in all he believes, in all he does. *The new creature*, that which God hath new created in the heart, in which life breathes, and nothing but life breathes, which is taught by God, and true to God from its very infancy; that is his rule whereby he is to walk, the apostle expressly calls it so. Gal. xvi. 15, 16. That which is begotten by God is a son; and the son, as he is begotten by the breath of the spirit, so he is preserved and led by the same breath; and such as are so led, are sons, and none else; for it is not reading of scriptures, and gathering rules out thence, that makes a son, but the receiving of the spirit, and the being led by the spirit. Rom. viii. 14, 15. And being the whole worship of the gospel is in the spirit, there is a necessity of receiving that in the first place; and then in it the soul learns to know and wait for its breathings and movings, and follows on towards the Lord in them. The spirit cannot be withheld from breathing on that which he hath begotten; and that breath is a guide, a rule, a way, to that which it breatheth upon. Now this is most manifest, even from the Scriptures themselves, they expressly calling Christ the way, the truth, &c., the new creature, the rule, the faith, grace, or gift, given to be the rule, testifying the heart to be that which God hath

chosen to write his laws in; but where do they call themselves a perfect rule of faith and obedience? "They are they (saith Christ) which testify of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John v. 39, 40. Life cannot be received from the Scriptures, but only from Christ the fountain thereof; no more can the Scriptures give the rule, but point to the fountain of the same life, where alone the rule of life, as the life itself, can be received. The Scriptures cannot ingraft into Christ, nor give a living rule to him that is ingrafted; but he that hath heard the testimony of the Scriptures concerning Christ, and hath come to him, must abide in him, and wait on him for the writing of the law of the spirit of life in his heart, and this will be his rule from the law of sin and death, even unto the land of life. Now if men have mistaken in the night of darkness, and put the Scriptures out of their place (even in the place of the Spirit), and so have become ministers, not of the Spirit, but of the letter, whereas the apostles were made "able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit," 2 Cor. 3. 6. let them not be offended at the spirit of God for teaching us otherwise, nor at us for learning as the spirit of God hath taught us; the Scriptures also testifying that this is the rule, but nowhere setting up themselves for the rule. And it is the same spirit, which would now fix men in the Scriptures, to keep men from Christ the living rule and only way to life eternal, as formerly kept them by tradition from the Scriptures, though it is hard for them who are entangled in this deceit to see it.

Now for the proof of these things thus barely here charged, the reader is referred to Mr. Norton's (as they style him) Tractate against the Quakers. Concerning the validity whereof, I refer the reader to Francis Howgill's answer thereto, wishing him to read both in the fear and dread of the Almighty, waiting for his counsel to guide him in the true discerning which of them savors of man's wisdom, and which of them writes from acquaintance with the truth itself. In which answer of his, he recites such errors of that Norton, as would make a great sound against the Quakers, if

any such could justly be charged upon them. I shall mention only two or three of them, viz. That God is a distinct subsistence from the Son and Spirit; and that the Son is a distinct subsistence from the Father and the Spirit; and because it is said, the "Father shall give you another Comforter," this *another*, he saith, is intelligible of the Essence. (Are there then three distinct, infinite Essences or Beings?) *That the Spirit of God without the letter is no spirit.* (He was before the letter, he was never limited to the letter, he will be after the letter, and he is what he is without the letter). *That Christ's words* John xvii. 21. *give an uncertain sound.* (Where have any of the Quakers cast such a blemish upon any portion of scripture?) Surely this man had more need to seek to have his own vessel cleansed, than to accuse others of errors or blasphemy. And if he have no other way to overthrow them, than by maintaining such kind of things as these against them, he will never get victory over them any other way than by the outward sword: but by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony, and not loving their lives unto the death, they will easily overcome all such kind of champions.

4. The fourth and last instance which they give of the destructiveness of their doctrine to the fundamental truths of religion, is, *That opinion of theirs of being perfectly pure and without sin, which* (say they) *tends to overthrow the whole gospel, and the very vitals of Christianity: for they that have no sin, have no need of Christ, or of his satisfaction, or blood to cleanse them, nor of faith, repentance, &c.*

Ans. That the Lord God is able perfectly to redeem from sin in this life; that he can cast out the strong man, cleanse the house, and make it fit for himself to dwell in; that he can finish transgression and sin in the heart, and bring in everlasting righteousness; that he can tread down Satan under the feet of his saints, and make them more than conquerors over him; this they confess they steadily believe. But that every one that is turned to the light of the spirit of Christ in his heart, is presently advanced to this state, they never held forth; but that the way is long, the travel hard,

the enemies and difficulties many, and that there is need of much faith, hope, patience, repentance, watchfulness against temptations, &c., before the life in them arrive at such a pitch. Yet for all this, saith Christ to his disciples, "Be ye perfect;" directing them to aim at such a thing; and the apostle saith, "Let us go on unto perfection;" and Christ gave a ministry "for the perfecting of the saints:" and they do not doubt but that he that begins the work, can perfect it even in this life, and so deliver them out of the hands of sin, Satan, and all their spiritual enemies, as that they may serve God without fear of them any more, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their lives.

Now how is this doctrine, or how is this people, because of their believing and holding forth this doctrine, guilty of all this great and heavy charge that is laid upon them here; as that *they have no need of Christ, his satisfaction, his blood, nor of faith, repentance, growing in grace, God's word and ordinances, nor of watchfulness and prayer, &c.?* Let us consider the thing a little further.

First, The doctrine of perfection, if it should be granted to deny all this, yet it cannot be supposed to deny the need thereof, until the state of perfection be attained. Nay, they that truly believe that such a state is attainable, cannot deny the use of those things which are proper to lead to that state, but will conscientiously apply themselves thereto, and press all others thereto, who desire to attain that state. And they that have either heard them speak, or read their writings with any equality of mind, may abundantly testify for them against the unrighteousness and injury of this charge. Their life lies in Christ, their peace in his satisfaction for them, and in a sensible feeling of his blood sprinkled in their consciences, to cleanse them from sin; and by that faith, which is God's gift, they feel, and wait further to feel, the righteousness of Christ imputed to them for justification. And as for being *perfectly just in themselves*, it is a very unrighteous charge upon them; for their justice and righteousness is in Christ for ever, and not in themselves; but in the denial and crucifying of self are they made partakers

of it, which is bestowed by the free grace, mercy, and power, of him who hath mercy on them, and not by any willing or running of theirs. And as for repentance, they feel the need of it, and find a godly sorrow wrought in them, and a bitter mourning over him whom they once pierced, and still pierce, so far as they hearken to the tempter, and follow the motions and lusts of the transgressing nature. And they do both watch and pray against sin, and feel what a bitter thing it is to have the watch so slackened, whereby the temptation prevails, which would lead to sin. And as for *purifying themselves daily*, and *putting off the old man*, and *putting on the new;* it is that which their hearts delight to be continually exercised about; and all this with a hope that it may be effected, that the vessel may be made holy to the Lord, a fit spiritual temple for him to dwell in, that he may display his life, glory, power, and pure presence in them. But if the belief that this may be attained, in the way wherein God leadeth them towards it, and a hope to attain it, with an acknowledgment of it so far as it is attained; I say, if this make them guilty of so great a charge, then they are indeed guilty; for they cannot but believe it, wait for it, hope for it, and acknowledge it, so far as they feel it wrought in them. But how can this possibly make them guilty of denying these things, seeing the exercise of these things not only standeth with, but is increased by, such a belief and hope?

Secondly, The state of perfection itself, doth not exclude these things, in such a way as this charge seems to intimate. For in the state of perfection, the blood is not laid aside as useless, but remains to keep pure for ever. It is *the blood of the everlasting covenant*, Heb. xiii. 20. both the covenant and the blood last for ever, and are useful even to them that are perfect. And there is need and use of the faith in the blood, to believe the preservation. As the covenant itself lasts, so that which lets into, and keeps in the covenant, lasts also. That which unites and ties the soul to Christ, the life, abides in the soul for ever, even as the union itself abides. And there is a growing in the life, even where the heart is puri-

fied from sin, even as Christ did grow and wax strong in spirit; for a state of perfection doth not exclude degrees. And so there is also a need of watching against temptations in a perfect state; for Adam was perfect, and yet he needed a watch: and Christ was perfectly pure and without sin, and yet he did both watch and pray. So that if any were brought to the perfect state of a man, even unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, which the ministry was given to bring all the saints unto, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. if any were taught and enabled so to walk in the light, as to be cleansed by the blood from all sin, and to have such fellowship with the Father and the Son, as might make their joy full, 1 John i. 3, 4, 7. if any were brought to that state of glory, as to be chaste virgins, 2 Cor. xi. 2. without spot or wrinkle of the flesh, but holy and without blemish, Eph. v. 27. if any should be made perfect in every good work to do his will, which was a thing the apostle prayed for, Heb. xiii. 21. if any should have so put off the old man, and have put on the wedding garment, as to be made ready and fit to be married to the Lamb, Rev. xix. 7. yet this would not exclude faith in the blood, or prayer, or watchfulness, to keep the garment pure, &c., nor growth in the life. And this we are not ashamed to profess, that we are pressing after, and some have already attained very far, even to be made perfect as pertaining to the conscience; being so ingrafted into Christ the power of God, so planted into the likeness of his death and resurrection, so encompassed with the walls and bulwarks of salvation, as that they feel no condemnation for sin, but a continual justification of the life; being taught, led, and enabled to walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Rom. viii. 1.

From what they have said concerning this opinion of perfection (as they call it) they draw an argument against their other doctrines in these words. *Such fundamentals of Christianity are overthrown by this one opinion of theirs, and how much more by all their other doctrines?*

Ans. To which I shall say this: If their grounds and proofs against any other doctrines of the Quakers, be no

more weighty and demonstrative, than those they have here brought forth against the doctrine of perfection, they may spare entertaining prejudices against them and condemning them; and in the first place weigh them in a more equal balance than they have done this. And I dare appeal to any naked and unbiased spirit, who shall fairly consider what is above written, whether the doctrine of perfection be such a hideous error as they have represented it. Nay, whether it be not a precious truth of the gospel of Christ, and a great encouragement to him who shall follow the command of Christ; who saith, "Be ye perfect;" to believe that (in the way of faith and obedience) he may be wrought up to such an estate by the free grace, mercy, love, and power of God. Yea, let me add this word more; he that feeleth the everlasting arm working one sin out of his heart, cannot but believe that the same arm can work out all, and pluck up every plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted; which hope and belief causeth him with joy to follow this arm through the regeneration. But if I did believe there were no perfecting the work of redemption in this life, but I must still in part be a slave to Satan, still crying out of the body of sin and death, and never have my heart purified for the Holy One to inhabit in, but remain in part unconverted, unchanged, unregenerated, unsanctified; oh, how heavily should I go on! I am sure it would be as a weight upon my spirit in resisting of sin and Satan. This is not the glad tidings of the everlasting gospel, but sad news from the borders of death, which would keep the creature not only in the bonds of death, but without hope of deliverance in this life; and refer the hope to that day wherein there is no more working out of redemption, but the eternal judgment of the tree as it falls.

Now having, after this manner, proved that the doctrines of the Quakers are destructive to the fundamental truths of religion, they lay down their argument whereupon they conclude that it is lawful for them, nay, their duty, to put them to death, in these words: "Now the commandment of God is plain, that he that presumes to speak lies in the name of

the Lord, and turns people out of the way which the Lord hath commanded to walk in, such a one must not live, but be put to death." Zech. xiii. 3. Deut. xiii. 6. xviii. 20.

Ans. 1. By what hath been said against them, it is not manifest that they have spoken lies in the name of the Lord. Nay, if they themselves, who thus charge them, could but soberly and mildly, with a Christian spirit, weigh the thing, would it not rather appear that they, in thus falsely charging them, and managing such untrue and unrighteous arguments against them, have spoken lies, both concerning them, and against the Lord and his truth? And as for turning men out of the way, that cannot be justly charged on them, who turn men to Christ, the living way, and deliver the same message the apostles did, that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;" and who point them to that place where God hath said this light is to be found, which is the heart, where God writes the new covenant, and the laws thereof, Heb. viii. where the word of faith is nigh. Rom. x. Surely they that direct hither, do not turn men out of the way. But they that point men to guess at the meanings of scriptures, and to gather knowledge, and form rules to themselves out of them, by their own natural wit and understanding, which can never reach the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and which God hides the true knowledge of the Scriptures from, these are those that turn men out of the way. For they that rightly understand the Scriptures, must first receive a measure of the Spirit to understand it with; even as they that wrote any part thereof, did first receive a measure of the Spirit to write it by.

2. It is not manifest by these places quoted, that the governors of New England have received authority from the Lord to put the Quakers to death, if their doctrines were such as they accuse them to be. That of Deut. xiii. 6. is a manifest case concerning one that should tempt to the following of other gods, of the gods of the people round about, nigh or far off; in such a case the offender was to be stoned to death, ver. 10. but is this applicable to cases of doctrine? That of Deut. xviii. 20. gives a clear note how the prophet

may be known that speaks a lie in the name of the Lord, and what kind of lie it is, for which he is to be put to death, ver. 22. but it doth not say that every man in the commonwealth of Israel, that holdeth any doctrine contrary to what some of them might call the fundamental doctrines of the law, should be put to death. That of Zech. xiii. 3. is a prophecy, not a command, and is not to be understood in man's wisdom, nor to be fulfilled in man's will. It were better to wait for the true openings of prophecies in the Spirit, than to let the carnal part loose, to gather somewhat out of them for the satisfying of the flesh, and making its thirst after the blood of God's lambs appear more plausible. I would but put this question to your consciences in the sight of God; whether in a conscientious submission to the will of God in this scripture ye put them to death; or whether from this scripture ye seek a shelter and cover for the thing, having already done it, or fully purposed to do it.

So that the case is not here the same with any of the cases mentioned in those scriptures: for if some of their doctrines were lies (which ye have been very far from proving), yet it was not for such kind of lies that death was appointed in the commonwealth of Israel. And yet there is a large difference between what was lawful to be done in the kingdom or commonwealth of Israel, and what is now lawful to be done. The kingdom or commonwealth of Israel was a state outwardly representative of what was inwardly to be done in the state of the gospel, by Christ the king thereof. He is the king and law-giver to his people, and he is their judge concerning their receiving or rejecting them; concerning their obeying or disobeying them; concerning their holding the faith, or their letting go the faith; and maintaining things contrary thereto. And he doth judge his people here in this life, so far as he thinks fit, Heb. x. 30, 31. reserving also what he thinks fit for another time of judgment. Acts xvii. 31. And who is he that shall take his office out of his hand, and judge one of his servants in the things of his kingdom? Rom. xiv. 4. Is not this an intruding into Christ's kingly office? He gave authority to, and command for, the

doing of such things outwardly before his coming, as might represent what he would do inwardly after his coming; but where hath he given authority since his coming, to do such things any more? Doth not the typical king, with his typical government, cease, after that king, with his government which is figured out, is come?

O governors of New England! to take away the life of a man is a weighty thing; and the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who either doth it in a violent manner, or who maketh an unjust law to do it by. But "how precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints!" Oh, how will ye be able to bear the weight of their blood, when the Lord maketh inquisition for it! Ye had need have a very clear warrant in this case. Oh, how will ye answer this thing at the judgment-seat of Christ! Alas! such arguments as these will stand you in little stead: but ye have done it, and now must maintain it; and it is exceeding hard for you (being thus deeply engaged in the sight of the nations) to come to a sober and serious consideration of the state of the case, as it stands before the Lord.

2. The second ground or consideration which they hold forth to clear their law of banishment and death against the QUAKERS to be warrantable and just, is this: "Because they are far from giving that honor and reverence to magistrates which the Lord requireth, and good men have given to them; but, on the contrary, show contempt against them in their very outward gesture and behavior; and some of them at least, spare not to belch railing and cursing speeches," &c.

Ans. That we do not give that honor and reverence to magistrates, which the Lord requireth, deserves a weighty proof. For what we do or forbear in this kind, we do as in the sight of the Lord; as persons who are not only liable to suffer from men, but also to give an account to HIM at the last day. Now towards magistrates our carriage is thus, as in the presence of the Lord.

1. We observe their commands in all things that are according to God. We submit ourselves to the government that is supreme, and to the governors under the supreme, for

the Lord's sake, who in their several places ought to be for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well, according to 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. This is God's ordinance, and here magistracy is in its right place, namely, in punishing the evil-doer for his evil deeds; but not make a man an offender for a word, or for a gesture, which is neither good nor evil in itself, but as it is done. He that pulleth off his hat, or boweth in flattery, or to please man, in him it is evil: he that forbeareth to do it in obedience to God, and in the fear of his name, in him it is good.

2. When any magistrates punish us for well-doing, for our obedience to the Lord's spirit, though we know God never gave power to any magistracy to punish therefor; yet we patiently suffer under them; referring our cause to him that judgeth righteously, and waiting on him for strength to carry us through our sufferings for his name's sake.

3. When we appear before them, we appear as in the Lord's presence, desiring his guidance, that we may give due honor and respect to all that is of him in them; and may be kept from honoring or pleasing that which is not of him, and which he would not have us honor. This is the temper of our spirits, and accordingly is our carriage as in the sight of the Lord, whatever men deem of us.

But the great matter is, because we do not pull off our hats, and bow to them, or that we use plain language to them (as thou and thee to a partlcuiar person), which some of them will needs interpret to be contempt; though others of them, who are more sober and considerate, can clearly discern that it is not at all in contempt either to their authority or their persons; but in a mere single-hearted obedience to God. Now to drive this a little towards a fair trial, consider in meekness, and in God's fear.

1. What kind of honor this is which is thus much stood upon? Is it the honor which is from above, or the honor which is from below? What part springs it from in man; from the new birth, or from the earthly nature? And what doth it please in man? Doth it please that which is begót-

ten of God? Doth it please the meekness, the humility, the lowliness, the new nature? Or doth it please and help to keep up the old nature, the lofty spirit, even that part which is prone in every man to be exalted out of the fear of God? For this I may freely say, that whatsoever is of the earth, hath an aptness in it to feed the earthly part; and particularly this of outward bowing to the creature, is apt to hurt him that receiveth it. In man's giving and receiving honor, God hath been forgotten. They have forgotten God, who have been giving honor to one another; and they have forgotten God, who have been receiving honor from one another. And what if the Lord, who hath made us sensible of the evil herein, hath laid a restraint upon us? Can any forbid the Lord from laying such a thing upon us? Or is it lawful for any to go about to hinder us from obeying the Lord therein? Thou who art thus eager in contending for honor, art thou sure it is not the evil part in thee, which doth desire it? If it be the good part in thee, thou wilt desire it in meekness and gentleness; yea, and wilt be able to bear the want of it with joy, where it is denied thee upon such an account, that it may run more purely towards the Lord.

Now if it be earthly honor, it is of a perishing nature: it is not always to last; but is one of the fashions of this world which is to pass away (how long a time soever it hath had); and God may call his people from it at his pleasure; and if he calls from it, they must leave it off, though the earthly nature and power be never so angry thereat. The Lord hath let men have a long day, wherein man hath been lifted up, and appeared great, by receiving that honor which is of the earth, not of the faith: but at length the Lord will bring forth his day, wherein he will be great, and have every knee bow to him, and every tongue confess to him: and then man shall be little, and his honor fall, and the Lord alone be exalted. Isa. ii. 17.

2. Doth not the image of God grow up into the likeness of God? Doth God respect men's persons? Did Christ regard any man's person? Did not James say, "If ye have

respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law, as transgressors?" James ii. 9. Of what law? Of the law of faith, which exalteth the new birth, and layeth flat the creature in its transgressing nature, estate, and honor. For, saith Christ, who received not honor from men, nor gave honor to men, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another?" John v. 44. That which receiveth earthly honor, is of the earth, and cannot believe; and that which giveth earthly honor, is of the earth, and so not of the faith. The faith is a denying of the earth, a taking up of the cross to the earthly honor, which is as a block in the way of faith. How can ye believe, when ye cherish that part in you which is against the faith? The immortal seed of life, in the day of the gospel, grows up out of the earth, leaving it, with its customs, fashions, honors, and its nature and worship too, behind it.

So that look into the ground of the thing with the eye which seeth over the transgressing state, and over all things which have sprung up from the transgressing part, and which please that part which is out of the faith, out of the life and power, drawn from God into the earth, and it will be manifest that earthly honor hath its root, foundation, and service there; but falleth off like a shackle from man's spirit, as the life riseth in him, and as he is redeemed out of the earth.

Now as for Abraham's and Jacob's bowings, &c., those things had their season under the law (which made nothing perfect), as other things had; but now God calleth every man to bow to the Son, and will not permit so much as a bowing to an angel, who is far more honorable than any magistrate. And the Son calleth to honor the Father, and to seek the honor which cometh from God only; and he that will be his disciple, must take up his cross to the earthly part, and follow him, who neither gave earthly honor, nor received earthly honor, but condemned it. John v. 44. Therefore let men consider the ground of the thing, and the different state between Jews under the law, and Christians under the gospel; and not think the bringing of

instances from them of old time can excuse us from following Christ according to the law of faith, who gave us this pattern of not receiving or giving honor to men's persons; and let not the weight of our plea (it having so great impression on our hearts) be despised by any that pretend relation to our Lord and Master, which I shall briefly thus recite.

1. It is the single and sincere desire of our hearts to give all the honor and obedience to magistrates, which is due unto them according to the Scriptures.

2. It is manifest that we are careful of observing all just laws; and patient in suffering through unjust laws, or where the magistrate doth persecute us without or against law.

3. This kind of honor of pulling off the hat, and bowing to the person, we do not find commanded in scripture; but we find Christ's command against it, who saith "follow me;" who both denied to receive it, and did not give it; but condemned it. And we find its rise to be from the earthly part, and to the earthly part it is given; which it pleaseth, being given to it; or is offended at being denied it: and this part we are taught by the Lord to crucify in ourselves, and not to cherish in others.

4. The bowing of persons under the law (which was an earthly state, wherein many things were permitted, which are not permitted under the gospel) doth not bind Christians under the gospel; and doth not limit the spirit of God from taking of any one or more, or all of his people, from giving that which the earthly part calleth honor, to that which is of the earth.

5. We do appeal to the Lord our God (who is our judge and law-giver) that he hath laid this upon our spirits; and hath smitten several of us, when there hath arisen so much as a desire in us to please men in this particular: and in the fear of his name, and in obedience to him, we do forbear it; and not either in contempt of authority, or of the persons in authority.

6. We find by much experience, that the forbearing of this is a service to our Lord and Master, and a hurt to his

enemy. It offendeth the passionate, it offendeth the rough, it offendeth the proud and lofty; that spirit is soon touched and stirred by it: but that which is low, that which is meek, that which is humble, that which is gentle, that is easily drawn from valuing and minding of it, and findeth an advantage therein. And of a truth the earthly spirit knows and feels that God is taking the honor from it, and giving it to the meek and humble; which makes it muster up its forces and arguments to hold it as long as it can.

Now what moderate man (much more any Christian) could not forego the putting off of a hat, or the bowing of a knee, upon so solemn and weighty an account as this. If this were thine own case, wouldst thou be forced, imprisoned, fined, or have this made an argument against thee to banish thee, or put thee to death? Thou dost not know how the Lord may visit thee by his spirit, and what he may require of thee. He may call thee also to give forth thy testimony (and to fight under the banner of his spirit) against all the fashions, customs, honors, yea, and worships of this world. That which is born of God, is not of this world: and as it groweth up in any earthen vessel, so it draweth the vessel also more and more out of this world. "Ye are not of the world," (but called out of the world), "therefore the world hates you." That which can please the world, that which can bow to it and honor it, that the world loves; but the immortal seed which cannot bow, but testifies against the world's honors, that they are not of the Father, but of the world, this seed the world hates, and the vessels in whom it bubbles up, and through whom it giveth forth its testimony against the world.

Object. *But in the New Testament Luke styles Theophilus most excellent; and Paul, speaking to Festus, said, Most noble Festus; which are terms or expressions of honor and reverence.*

Ans. Christ did promise his disciples and ministers that he would be with them, and give them what to say. Now if nobility and true excellency did appear in any persons, and he led them by his spirit to acknowledge it, this is no sufficient warrant for men to do the like in their own wills;

or to give such titles to persons being in authority, whether they be such persons or no. Luke knew Theophilus to be excellent, and he was led by the spirit of God to style him excellent; for by the spirit of God he wrote the scripture, Luke i. 3. wherein he so styles him. And for Festus, he that shall strictly observe his carriage, will find it to be very noble, in that he would not be won by the importunity and informations of the high priest and chief of the Jews, and of the multitude also, against Paul, but applied himself to an upright consideration of the cause, Acts xxv. 2. 24. to the end. The same spirit which showed the unworthy carriage and ignobleness of the high priest and zealous professing Jews, might move Paul to set this mark of honor upon Festus. The Lord loveth truth in the heart, and truth in words, and the following of the guidance of his Spirit into truth: but to give a man high titles, merely because he is great and high in the outward, without discerning that he is such, and without the leading of God's spirit so to do, this is of the flesh, according to the will of the flesh, out of the faith, and not according to truth and righteousness: and in the fear of the Lord there is a watch set over our spirits in these things, lest we should esteem and honor men according to the will of the flesh, and not in the Lord. Titles of office, or of relations, as master, father, &c., we find freedom to give; but titles which tend towards flattery, or exalting man out of his place, and the lifting up of his heart above his brethren, we have not freedom in the Lord to use. And Elihu also found a restraint upon him in this respect. Job xxxii. 21, 22.

Object. *It is noted as a brand and reproach of false teachers, that they despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.* 2 Pet. ii. 10. *and* Jude ver. 8. *Now it is well known that the practice of the* QUAKERS *is but too like those false teachers, &c.*

Ans. It were worth a narrow search and inquiry what the dominion and dignities (or glories) are, which the false teachers speak evil of, or blaspheme, &c. Search the Scriptures: where do ye find the false teachers speaking evil of earthly authorities? Nay, they still cling close to them, ex-

alt them, get them on their side, and cry them up, and will be sure enough never to fail in pleasing the magistrate with cringing and bowing, or any thing of that nature. But there is the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ in the heart; there is the rule of his spirit over the fleshly part; and there is the truth in the inner man; there are spiritual dignities (or glories); these the false teachers, in all ages, did despise, and were not afraid to speak evil of; though they should have feared to speak evil of the movings and guidings and lowest appearings of the spirit of God (which excel in nature and worth the greatest earthly dignities); yet they have not; but have blasphemed the holy life and appearances of God in his people: nay, they have not spared his more eminent breakings-forth in his very prophets, holy apostles, and Christ himself. Mark what they speak evil of; they speak evil of "the things they know not." ver. 10. What were the things they knew not? The inward movings and virtue of his spirit; the inward power, life, glory, and dominion of truth in the heart, they knew not: it was against Christ in his people their evil deeds and hard speeches were. ver. 15. But as for the high and great ones, the dominions and dignities of the earth, they knew them well enough, and did not speak evil of them; but had their persons in admiration, because of the advantage they had by them. ver. 16. They have always had a double advantage from these, both of gain to themselves, and of overbearing the lambs of Christ by their great, swelling words. The Lord hath still so ordered it in his wisdom, both before the coming of Christ, at his coming, and since, that the false prophets and teachers should still have the advantage of the outward authorities, and his people be a poor, afflicted, despised, persecuted remnant, whose glory is inward, and cannot be discerned by the outward eye, no, not of God's Israel. See the dignities particularly expressed, Rev. xiii. 6. *The name of God*, his holy power in his people; *the tabernacle*, which is sanctified and made honorable for him by his spirit; *them that dwell in heaven*, who are redeemed out of the earth, and have their conversation above; these are dignities which the earthly

authorities, nay, the false teachers themselves, never knew the worth of, and so they are not afraid to blaspheme them. The first beast, on which the false church rode, with the second beast, which are of the very race of these false teachers, making an image to the first beast, because of advantage, all join together in blaspheming these dignities. Rev. xiii. and xvii.

To open this a little further: John said in his days, that it was then the last time; for there were many antichrists then come. 1 John ii. 18. From whence came they? "They went out from us," saith he, "but they were not of us." ver. 19. "They were sensual; they had not the spirit," and so could not abide the presence, life, judgment, and power of the spirit; but "separated themselves." Jude 19. But whither went they, when they went out from the true church? why, they went out into the world. 1 John iv. 2. They got the form of godliness, which would stand well enough with the lusts and ease of the flesh, and went and preached up that in the world. And now speaking the things of God in the worldly spirit, the world could hear them. ver. 5. Thus having got a great party into the form of truth, now they blaspheme the power, now they mock at the movings of the Spirit, the leadings of the Spirit, the living name, the true tabernacle, the true inhabitants of heaven, who have their conversation above, in the heavenly nature, in the heavenly principle, in the pure spirit of life (for as they are begotten by the Spirit, so they live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit). This, the false teachers (who have got the form of doctrine, and the form of discipline, holding it in the fleshly wisdom, where they may hold their lusts too) mock at and blaspheme. Jude 18. And this hath been the great way of deceit since the apostasy; God gathered a separated people from the world; the false teachers get the form of godliness from them, and set it up in the world, and then turn against the power, and deny it, speaking evil of or blaspheming the spirit, which is the dominion, and his ministrations (in the spirits of his people), which are the dignities or glories of the New Testament, which excel

all earthly dignities, and also the ministration of the first covenant. 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8.

So likewise for *railing speeches*. The false prophets can speak smooth words; speaking in the fleshly wisdom, they can please the fleshly part in their very reproofs; but he that speaks from God, must speak his words, how harsh soever they seem to the fleshly part. And he that speaks in his name, spirit, majesty, and authority, is exalted high above the consideration of the person to whom he speaks. What is a prince, a magistrate, a ruler, before the Lord, but clay, or dust and ashes? If the Lord bid any of his servants call that, which was once the faithful city, harlot; and say, concerning her princes, that they are rebellious, and companions of thieves, Isa. i. 21, 23. what is the poor earthen vessel, that it should go to change or mollify this speech? And so for the false prophets and teachers: if the spirit of the Lord (in the meanest of his servants) call them idol shepherds, hirelings, thieves, robbers, dogs, dumb dogs, greedy dumb dogs, that cannot bark (though they can speak smooth pleasing words enough to fleshly Israel, and the earthly great ones), generation of vipers, hypocrites, whited sepulchres, graves that appear not, &c., who may reprove him for it, or find fault with the instrument he chooses? Now man judging by the fleshly wisdom, may venture to call this railing; and the prophets of the Lord have been accounted rude and mad and troublers of Israel; and so it is at this day: but the Lord, being angry with the transgressor, may send a rough rebuke to him, by what messenger he pleaseth; and what is the poor creature that he should gainsay his Maker, and desire the message might be smoother? But now these false teachers, who can speak smoothly to the fleshly part, flatter the great ones, and the professors which fall in with their form of doctrine and discipline, they deny the power, and blaspheme the movings and goings-forth of the spirit of God in his people; and if any be drawn by the spirit to separate from their formal way, and to seek after the life and presence of the power, him they cried out of as a sectary, a blasphemer, a heretic; and so bring rail-

ing accusations against that life and spirit by which he is drawn, and of him for following the drawings of it: and thus they become guilty of speaking evil of what they know not. Jude 10. They that are drawn out of the world's worships, know from what they were drawn; but they that remain still in them, do not know the power which drew out of them, nor into what it drew; but looking on it with a carnal eye, it appears mean to them, and so they readily disdain it, and think they may safely speak evil of it, though in truth they know it not.

And as for *cursings;* there are children of the curse, as well as of the blessing: and the spirit of the Lord may pronounce his curse against any children of the curse by whom he pleases. Curse ye Meroz: curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof. Judges v. 23. And yet Meroz did not persecute, but only not come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. So the professing Jews, with their rulers and teachers, were cursed by the spirit of the Lord. Ps. lxix. 22. &c. So Judas was cursed. Ps. cix. 6. &c. For Peter applieth it to him. Acts i. 20. Now if the curse be causeless, it shall not come. Prov. xxvi. 2. And well will it be with him whom men causelessly curse. Mat. v. 11. Although they were the highest, devoutest, and most zealous professing Jews, with their priests and rulers in those days; and although they should be the highest, most zealous, and devout formal Christians, with their rulers and teachers in these days, who may have got this form, as well as they got that form, and yet hold the truth in unrighteousness, and deny the power, as false teachers formerly did, who held the form. 2 Tim. iii. 5. But the case of Shimei is not at all proper to the thing in hand, because he did not pretend to curse in the Lord's name and authority; but, manifestly out of the fear of God, cursed the Lord's anointed in his low state. Neither were these two QUAKERS put to death for cursing. So that if Humphry Norton were never so blamable, yet that reacheth not to them, but is to be reckoned to him that did it, who is to stand or fall to his own master therein. Yet this I may say, because it is so extra-

ordinary a case (we having not known the like) that if he had not the Lord's clear warrant for what he did, surely the Lord will severely judge him, for speaking so peremptorily and presumptuously in his name, if not required by him.

And so as touching *contemptuous carriage.* When there is not contempt in the heart, it is not easy to show contemptuous carriage; but the fleshly part missing of the honor which is pleasing to it, and being offended thereby, is ready to apprehend that to be spoken and done in contempt, which is spoken and done in the humility and fear of the Lord.

3. A third ground or consideration to justify their law of banishment and death of the QUAKERS, is drawn from "Solomon's confining of Shimei, and of putting him to death for breach of his confinement;" whereupon they argue, that "if execution of death be lawful upon breach of confinement, may not the same be said for breach of banishment; banishment being not so strait, but giving more liberty than confinement?"

Ans. The question is not whether the magistrate, upon no occasion, may banish upon pain of death; but whether the banishment of the QUAKERS, upon pain of death, was just or no. If it were ever so manifest that a magistrate might banish, and put to death in case of not observing his law of banishment; yet that doth not prove that every law of banishment is just, and that the death of such as do not obey their law is just also. He may make a law in his own self-will, pride, passion, resolvedness, and stiffness of spirit, and so draw the sufferings of persons under that law (either of banishment or death) upon his own head. Now the QUAKERS coming in the name of the Lord, by his commission, and upon his work (whom all the magistrates of the earth are to reverence and bow before), if magistrates will presume to make a law to banish them upon pain of death; yet if the Lord require them either to stay or return, they know whom to fear and obey, which delivers them from the fear of them who can only torture and kill the body: and they had rather die in obedience to the Lord, than feel the

weight of his hand upon their souls for their disobedience. It is not in this case as it is in ordinary banishment upon civil accounts, where it is in men's will and power to abstain from the place from which they are banished; but they must fulfil the will of their Lord, not at all regarding what befals them therein.

4. The fourth ground or consideration to justify their law of banishment and death against the QUAKERS, is drawn from "the right and propriety which every man hath in his own house and land, and from the unreasonableness and injuriousness of another's intruding and entering into it, having no authority thereto; yea, and when the owner doth expressly prohibit and forbid the same. And that if any presume to enter thus, without legal authority, he might justly be impleaded as a thief or usurper; and if, in case of violent assault, he should be killed, his blood would be upon his own head." Whereupon it is argued thus: that "if private persons may, in such a case, shed the blood of such intruder, may not the like be granted to them that are the public keepers and guardians of the commonwealth? Have not they as much power to take away the lives of such, as, contrary to prohibition, shall invade or intrude into their public possessions or territories?" And that the QUAKERS do thus invade and intrude without authority, they argue thus: "For who can believe that QUAKERS are constables, to intrude themselves, invade, and enter, whether the colony will or not, yea, contrary to their express prohibition? If, in such violent and bold attempts, they lose their lives, they may thank themselves, as the blamable cause, and authors of their own death."

Ans. It is no invasion, nor intrusion, for any messengers and servants of the Lord to enter into any part of his earth at his command, upon his errand, and about his work. And if any should be so sent to the house of a particular person, to deliver a message from the Lord, and the owner of the house, instead of hearing and considering his message in meekness and fear, whether it were of God or no, should be rough and violent with him, and command him off, before

he had delivered his message, and either upon his not immediately going off, or his return with another message (for the Lord, if he please, may send him again) should fall upon him and kill him; upon whose head would this man's blood light?

2. If men will needs have it go for an invasion, it is an invasion of a spiritual nature, and the defence from it cannot be by carnal weapons. Killing of men's persons is not the way to suppress either truth or error. How have the Papists been able to defend their kingdom, or suppress the truth by their bloody weapons? They may prevail in their territories against men's persons for a season, but the truth will have a time of dominion, and will, in the mean time, be getting ground in men's minds and consciences, by the sufferings of the witnesses to it. Nay, my friends, if ye will defend yourselves from this invasion, ye must get better weapons.

3. Is this your rule concerning any that shall come in the name of the Lord; that if they be not constables, or other earthly officers, ye will banish them, and put them to death? Is the Lord of heaven and earth limited to send none but constables among you? Well! ye may judge by your law while your day lasts; but the Lord in his day will clear his servants and messengers, though they have not been constables, and lay it upon the heads of them who have unrighteously shed it.

5. The fifth ground or consideration, whereby they justify their law of banishment and death against the Quakers, is this: "Corruption of mind and judgment is a great infection and defilement, and it is the Lord's command that such corrupt persons be not received into the house; which plainly enough implies that the householder hath power enough to keep them out, and that it was not in their power to come, if they pleased, whether the householder would or no. And if the father of the family must keep them out of his house, the father of the commonwealth must keep them out of his jurisdiction (they being nursing fathers and nursing mothers by the account of God). So that what a house-

holder may do against persons that are infected with the plague or pestilence (who may kill them, if otherwise he cannot keep them out of his house), a magistrate may do the like for his subjects. And if sheep and lambs cannot be preserved from the danger of wolves, but the wolves will break in amongst them, it is easy to see what the shepherd or keeper of the sheep may lawfully do in such a case."

Ans. It is granted, that the corruption of the mind and judgment is defiling and infectious; and therefore every heart that knows the preciousness of truth, is to wait on the Lord in his fear, in the use of those means which he hath appointed for preservation from it; but that killing the persons is one of the means God hath appointed, this is still the thing in controversy, and is still denied to be either proper in itself, or sanctified by God to this end. The apostle says, "There must be heretics, that they which are approved may be made manifest," 1 Cor. xi. 19. but he doth not say, hereafter, when there are Christian magistrates, they must banish or cut off the heretics, as fast as they spring up; but God hath use of these things for the exercising of the spirits of his people, and the truth gains by overcoming them in the faith and power of the spirit. And so, as touching wolves, the apostle Paul called the elders of the church of Ephesus, and told them, that "after his departure, grievous wolves should enter in among them, not sparing the flock." Acts xx. 28, 29. 31. The Lord hath put into the hands of his shepherd a sword, which will pierce to the heart of the wolf; he standing faithful in the power of God, in the life of righteousness, need not fear any wolf; but by the power of the spirit, and presence of the truth, shall be able to preserve the consciences of his flock pure to God. What kind of shepherd is he, that cannot defend his flock without the magistrate's sword; but take away that, the wolf breaks in, and preys upon his sheep? Surely the true shepherd, who knows the virtue of the sword God hath put into his hand, will never call to the magistrate for his sword of another nature, which cannot touch the wolf, the heretic, the seducer, but only flesh and blood, with which the minis-

ters of Christ never wrestled nor fought. And this is not the way to preserve the hearts and consciences of the flock (it may perhaps strike terror into the fleshly nature); but their consciences are so much the more apt to be wrought upon by the doctrines, patience, and suffering of those who are thus dealt with. The magistrate's sword being thus used, doth not at all preserve that which is tender, but hurts it, disengages it, stirs up a witness in it against those that thus go about to defend that which they call truth, that build up their Jerusalem with blood, and govern their flock with force, affrighting them from that which they call error, and affrighting them into that which they call truth, with an outward sword; whereas the true temple is built in peace, governed in peace, maintained in peace, defended by peace; and error and heretics dispelled by the power of the spirit, manifesting the deceit to the conscience; and not by the sword of the magistrate, dealing with them as with worldly malefactors. Now this I say as before the Lord; the true shepherd, who hath received the sword of the spirit, and hath tried the virtue of it, cannot distrust it, cannot desire the magistrate's help by outward force against errors or heresies. He that looketh upon it as insufficient, and calleth to the magistrate for his sword, plainly discovers that he hath not received, or knoweth not the virtue of the true one, and dishonoreth both his master's work and weapon.

For that place of 2 John ver. 10. It is one thing for man not to receive a man into his house, and another thing for him to kill that person who offers to come against his will. Do ye believe in your hearts, that the apostle's intent was to direct the Christians, to whom he wrote, to keep them out by violence, and to kill them if they could not otherwise keep them out? Though the parallel is not proper; for God hath often sent his servants into countries, cities, and places of resort, against the will of the rulers, priests, and false prophets, but never to break violently into any man's house.

The magistrate keeping in his place, cannot but be a *nursing father to the church;* for let him draw out his sword against

that wickedness which is proper for him to cut down, it will exceedingly help to nurse up the church; but where hath the magistrate commission to meddle with any of the spiritual shepherd's work? Nay, his sword was never appointed to cut down errors, or heresies, or heretics; but the sword of the spirit, in the hand of the spiritual shepherd. God hath set up an hedge between these two powers, which he that breaketh down layeth both waste as to their true use, virtue, and order; and this antichrist hath long done in many appearances. The bringing of these two to rights, setting each in its proper place, will give such a wound to his kingdom, as he will not be able to recover. And mark this by the way; antichrist hath all along made use of the magistrate's sword to slay the lambs, under the name of heretics, sectaries, wolves, blasphemers; but Christ comes with the spirit of his mouth to slay antichrist. 2 Thes. ii. 8. That is the sword all the heretics, seducers, and false prophets were slain with in the apostles' days before the apostasy; and that is the sword that antichrist (who hath made use of the other sword against Christ all along the apostasy) shall be slain with after the apostasy. When Christ comes to fight against antichrist (who hath cruelly torn, rent, and butchered his people under the name of wolves) he will take his own sword, which is the word of his mouth. That did the work at first; that must do the work again. But in the midst, between these two seasons, there hath been bad work made with the magistrate's sword; the witnesses, upon every appearance and breaking forth of God's truth in them, having been liable to feel the smart of it.

6. Their sixth and last ground and consideration, whereby they justify their law of banishment and death against the Quakers, is this: "It was the commandment of the Lord Jesus unto his disciples, that when they were persecuted in one city, they should flee unto another; and accordingly it was his own practice, and the practice of the saints, who, when they have been persecuted, have fled away for their own safety."

"This," they say, "reason requires, that when men have

liberty unto it they should not refuse so to do; because otherwise they will be guilty of tempting God, and of incurring their own hurt, as having a fair way open for the avoiding thereof, but they needlessly expose themselves thereto." Whereupon they argue thus:

"If therefore, that which is done against the Quakers were indeed persecution, what spirit may they be thought to be acted and led by, who are, in their actings, so contrary to the commandment and example of Christ and his saints in the case of persecution, which these men suppose to be their case? Plain enough it is, that if their case were the same, their actings are not the same, but quite contrary. So that Christ and his saints were led by one spirit, and these people by another: for rather than they would not show their contempt of authority, and make disturbance among his people, they choose to go contrary to the express direction of Jesus Christ, and the approved example of his saints, to the hazard and peril of their own lives."

Ans. Afflictions, tribulations, trials, and persecutions are not to be fled from, but to be borne and passed through to the kingdom, into which the entrance is through many of these, Acts xiv. 22. and Christ saith, "He that will be his disciple, must take up his cross daily, and follow him." Luke ix. 23. Now persecution for Christ is part of the cross, which the disciple must not run away from, but take up, and follow Christ with. Yea, the apostle is very express, 2 Tim. iii. 12. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." It is the portion of all, and all must bear it. The world hateth and persecuteth (in some degree or other) all that are not of the world; and all must be content with their daily portion thereof, waiting on God for strength to bear the cross, not flying it; and the apostle commends the Hebrews for "enduring the great fight of afflictions." Heb. x. 32, 33, 34. The Jews were zealous for the law and ordinances of Moses, and grievous persecutions of the Christians, especially of such as had been of them before: now the Christians are commended for standing the shock, for bearing the brunt, for not fearing the loss of name,

goods, life, or any thing, but eying the heavenly treasure. So Christ, warning of persecution, bids the church to "fear none of those things which she should suffer," but "be faithful unto the death:" and he that thus overcometh, should not be hurt of the second death, Rev. ii. 10, 11. and the Apostle Peter says, "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled," 1 Pet. iii. 14. and the Apostle Paul bids the Philippians "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." And the same apostle who commended the Hebrews, as having done well in bearing the great fight of afflictions, encouraged them to go on still, and not to be "weary or faint in their minds, but resist even to blood," eying Christ, who endured the contradiction of sinners to the very last. Heb. xii. 3, 4. And he practised as he taught, for he was not terrified with bonds or afflictions, nor accounted his life dear unto him; but that which was dear unto him was the serving of his Lord and Master, in preaching and witnessing to his truths, as his spirit led him, Acts xx. 23, 24. trusting in the Lord to uphold him in enduring of them, or to deliver him out of them, as he pleased, 2 Tim. iii. 11. but that which he, and the rest of the apostles and saints of Christ, applied themselves to in case of persecution, was to suffer. 1 Cor. iv. 12. And whoever they are that will be Christ's faithful disciples now, must look to meet with the same cross as they did, not only from the profane world, but from the worldly professors also: for there were not only zealous worldly professors in that age, but the same spirit hath remained in every age since, which still gets into the best form it can, when need requires, to oppose the power thereby. And they that are in the spirit and in the power, must expect to be persecuted by such; and they are to bear it, and not to fly from it, unless by a particular call and dispensation from the Lord for a particular service; which is not the rule (as it is here made) but rather an exception from the rule.

So Christ sending his disciples in haste to preach the gospel, bids them not salute in the way, Luke x. 4. nor be stopped by persecution, but hasten to publish the sound of Christ's coming in the cities of Israel, "For the harvest was great, but the laborers few," Mat. ix. 37. and yet notwithstanding all the haste they could make, they should not have "gone over the cities of Israel, before the Son of man come." Mat. x. 23. There is a time to suffer persecution, and a time to flee from persecution; and both these are to be known in the Lord, and to be obeyed in the leadings of his spirit: but to lay it down as a general rule for Christians to observe, that when they are persecuted, they should flee; this is expressly contrary to the scriptures before mentioned, which show that Christians are not generally to flee, but to stand in the service and work to which they are called; bearing witness not only by believing and publishing, but also by suffering for the testimony of the truth. They are Christ's soldiers, and their duty is to stand in the battle, and bear all the shot and persecutions of the enemy: if God call them off to any other service, that is a sufficient warrant for them; but flying upon other terms may prove a great dishonor to their Master, and to his cause and truth, and may be the occasion of a great loss to their spirits, who are so tempted to flee. Neither is this bearing the brunt of persecutions, and standing in God's work and service (notwithstanding them all, even unto death) any tempting of God, but an obedient taking up of the cross according to his will and command. And whereas you plead that reason requires it; what kind of reason is it which bids avoid the cross of Christ, and flee for safety? And what kind of spirit is that, which preacheth this doctrine; laying it down as a general rule, for Christians to flee when they are persecuted? Is it not that spirit which would fain be at ease in the flesh, insomuch as itself will rather persecute, than be disturbed in its fleshly liberty, though it is very unwilling to bear the reproach of being accounted a persecutor? Ah! how did the Jews cry out against their fathers for killing the prophets, and verily thought if they had lived in their

days, they should by no means have done it: and yet the same spirit was in them, though they saw it not, but thought themselves far from it. That which blinded them was a wrong knowledge of the Scriptures, and a great zeal and devotion about their temple, worship, and ordinances, without a sensible feeling of the guidance of God's spirit. The same spirit that deceived them, layeth the same snare in these days, and men swallow it as greedily, and with as great confidence as they did; the zealous professors of religion, for the generality, still becoming persecutors of the present appearance of truth, not knowing what they do.

Thus in the fear of the Lord God, and in love to your souls with a meek and gentle spirit (not being offended at what ye have done, but looking over it to the Lord, who bringeth glory to his name, and advantage to his truth, by the sufferings and death of his saints) have I answered your grounds and considerations; and in the same fear, love, and meekness, have I some things further to propose to your considerations, which are of great concernment to you, and deserve to be weighed by an equal hand in the equal balance, without prejudice or partiality.

1. Consider meekly and humbly, whether the Scriptures be the rule of the children of the new covenant. For if the Scripture was not intended by God for the rule, and ye take it to be the rule, then ye may easily mistake the way to eternal life, and also err in your understanding and use of the Scriptures; making such a use of them as they were never intended for, and so missing of the true use and intent of them.

Now that the Scripture was not intended, nor given forth by God, to be the rule of the children of the new covenant; besides our faithful testimony from the sight of the thing in the true, eternal light, weigh our arguments from the Scripture; many are mentioned in our writings; consider at present of these three.

1. The Scripture is an outward rule or law; but the Scripture saith, the law of the new covenant shall be an inward law. It is written in the prophets, that all the children

of the new covenant, or New Jerusalem, shall be taught of the Lord, Isa. liv. 13. who teacheth them inwardly by his spirit, and writeth his law in their hearts, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. and after this manner did the Lord take his people into covenant with himself, and teach them in the apostles' days. 1 John ii. 27. The covenant is inward, the teacher inward, the writing inward, the law inward: and there it is to be read, learned, and known, where the spirit teacheth and writeth it.

2. Scripture (or the writings of Moses and the prophets) was not the law of the children of the new covenant (as such), not in the time of the old covenant. The law of Moses was the rule of their outward state, it was the rule of the outward Israel, but not the rule of the inward Israel; no, not then in those days.

In Deut. xxix. 1. Moses makes a covenant with Israel by express command from God, besides the former covenant which he made with them in Horeb. And he saith, the commandment of this covenant is not to be looked for where the other was written, but in another place, in a place nearer to them; even in their mouth, and in their heart; there they were to read, hear, and receive the commandment of this covenant. "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off," Deut. xxx. 11. "it is not in heaven," ver. 12. "neither is it beyond the sea," ver. 13. "but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it," ver. 14. "and this was the way of life then." ver. 15. "See (saith Moses) I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." Here thy eternal happiness depends; obey this word, and live; disobey it, and die. And if they had kept to this word; they would also have walked in obedience to the law; but neglecting this, they could never keep the law, but still came under the curse of it, and missed of the blessings. They thought to please God with sacrifices, and oil, and incense, and observing new moons and sabbaths, wherein the Lord still rejected them for want of their obedience to this word;

and the prophets still guide them to this word, bidding them "circumcise their hearts," which alone can be done by this water. Yea, after much contest between the Lord and them, when they seemed very desirous to please the Lord with what he should require, whether "burnt-offerings, calves, rams, or oil," in great plenty; the prophet lays by all that, and points them to the obedience of this word, as the way to please God, and as the only thing that he required of them: "He hath showed thee, O man! what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah vi. 8. All this is written in thy heart, O man! read there, obey that word, that is the thing that God requires. So *David's* law was the word written in his heart; he saw through sacrifices and burnt-offerings, to the inward writing, and this made him wiser than all his teachers, who were busied about the outward. The outward law was but a shadow of good things to come, it made nothing perfect; but *David* knew a perfect law, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Ps. xix. 7.

8. The Scriptures of the New Testament never call themselves the rule, but they call another thing the rule; they call the writings of God's spirit, in the hearts of his people, the laws of the new covenant, Heb. viii. 10. They call Christ "the Way, the Truth, the Life." John xiv. 6. (The way is the rule, the truth is the rule, the life is the rule). They call the new creature the rule; walking according to which, the peace and mercy is received and enjoyed. Gal. vi. 16. They refer to the Comforter, as the guide into all truth, John xvi. 13. yea, as the compass of all truth, wherein the believer is to have his whole life and course. Gal. v. 25. Live in the spirit, walk in the spirit, follow the spirit; keep within that compass and ye cannot err. A man may err in understanding and interpreting of scriptures; but he that hath received the spirit, knoweth the spirit, followeth the spirit, keepeth to the spirit: so far as he doeth so he cannot possibly err. So saith John, writing concerning seducers, warning against them, 1 John ii. 26. "Ye have re-

ceived an anointing, which teacheth you of all things." Keep to the teachings of that in every thing, and ye are safe. But may we not be deceived? Nay, the anointing keeps from all the deceit in the heart, and from all the deceits of seducers. "It is truth, and no lie," ver. 27. and it leads into all truth, and out of every lie; and this will teach you to abide in him. In whom? In the Word which was from the beginning, which is ingrafted into the heart of every believer, and into which the heart of every believer is ingrafted; and so he truly is in the vine, and the sap of the vine runs up into him, which makes him fruitful to God; he abiding in the Word which he hath heard from the beginning, and the Word which was from the beginning abiding in him. ver. 24. And the Apostle Paul saith expressly, that the righteousness of faith cometh by the hearing of this Word, making the same Word the rule to the children of the new covenant now, as Moses said was the commandment of God to them, quoting this place of Moses for it. Rom. x. 6. &c. So that Paul, indeed, taught nothing but *Moses and the prophets;* pointing to the very same Word and commandment of eternal life, as Moses had done. "This is the Word of faith which we preach;" that Word which Moses taught, which he said was nigh in the heart and in the mouth (no man need ascend up to heaven, or go down to the deep, or seek anywhere else for it), that is the very thing we point you to; that is the Word of faith, that is the commandment of life. And with what zeal would Paul (were he now alive in the body) declare against such, who should overlook or deny this Word, and set up his writing, with the writings of the rest of the apostles, for a rule instead thereof! Yea, I could show yet further, how the spirit of prophecy, or testimony of Jesus, or living appearance of God in the heart, hath been a rule to the witnesses against antichrist's deceit, all along the night of apostasy, Rev. xi. 3. xix. 10. though they themselves, being in the night, distinctly knew not what was their rule; but by a secret breath of life, were quickened, guided, preserved, and in it accepted: but these things will open of themselves, as

the mist is expelled, and the veil rent which hath overspread all nations, and covered professors generally in this night of antichristian darkness, and universal apostasy from the living power.

2. Consider whether the Scripture be your rule or no? that is, whether in singleness of heart ye wait on the Lord, to open the Scriptures by his spirit, and to keep out your carnal reason from thence (which cannot understand them, but will be wresting them, and making them speak as it would have them); or whether ye take scope to search into them with that part, which ever was shut out from the right knowledge of them. "The natural man understandeth not the things of the spirit of God." The spirit of the Lord alone understandeth the meaning of his own words, and he alone gives the understanding of them, which he gives not to the wise searcher and disputer (nor to the prudent professor. Mat. xi. 25.), but to the babe which he begets, to which he gives the kingdom, and opens the words which the Scripture speaks concerning the kingdom. "The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God;" and if that search into the Scriptures, it will gather only a knowledge suitable to its enmity. Thus the Jews were great enemies, and strong enemies, by the knowledge which they had gathered out of the scriptures written to them; and the same spirit hath also wound itself into the scriptures written since: and as then that spirit fought against Christ and his apostles, with those very scriptures which the spirit of Christ had formerly written; so the same spirit fights now against the lambs of Christ, with the scriptures which were written since. Yea, the great strong-hold of antichrist at this day, is scripture interpreted by the fleshly wisdom: for antichrist comes not in a direct denial of Christ or scriptures (he is too cunning to be found there), but bends them aside by the fleshly wisdom to serve the fleshly will, and thus undermines the spirit, and exalts the flesh, by a fleshly understanding and interpretation of those very scriptures which were written by the spirit against the flesh. And through this mistake it is, that some innocently cry up things practised at

the first springing up of truth, not seeing of what nature they were, and upon what account they were done, and what of them were cast off by the same spirit, which before had led to the use of them, though scripture expressly testifieth thereof. For, Rev. xi. 1, 2. there was the measuring of the building which God's own spirit had built, part whereof was reserved for God, part given to the Gentiles, or uncircumcised in heart, who are now the Gentiles, since the breaking down of the former distinction betwixt Jew and Gentile. That which God reserved for himself was "*the altar, the temple, the worshippers therein;*" all these are inward. *The outward court was given to the Gentiles*, to those who would be worshippers under the gospel, and yet had not the circumcision of the gospel; to them the court which is without the temple is given; and this they get and cry up, and tread under foot the holy city, trampling upon the inward, and undervaluing it. Christ within, the spirit within, the law within, the power within, becomes a reproach; and this they have power to do, even to keep down the inward, and cry up the outward, all the time of the forty-two months; and to persecute and slay the witnesses whom God raised up to testify for the inward, and against the outward (as it is now in the Gentiles' hands, and made use of by them to keep down the inward); and so the building being thus taken down, the church flies out of it into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God for her. Rev. xii. 6. Mark: she is not where she was before; that building was measured, taken down, and disposed of by God: but she hath been, and is all the time of the forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, in another place, prepared by the spirit of God for her, whither she fled, and where she was nourished from the face of the serpent, who was seeking after her, and making war with the remnant of her seed, ver, 14. &c. And they that seek for her now in her former building will miss of her, and may meet with another woman, which (in several appearances and disguises, and practising of ordinances appertaining to the outward court) blasphemes the holy city, the true temple, altar, and wor-

shippers. Happy is he that can read this; for it is the mystery of this book, sealed from all the Gentiles and worshippers in the outward court.

Many sorts cry up the Scriptures for their rule; but which of them is taught by the spirit to keep the carnal part out of the Scriptures? Which of them keeps out their own will and understanding, receiving their knowledge of Scriptures from that Spirit which wrote them? Do not men rather gather a knowledge in the flesh, and then grow strong, and wise, and able to dispute, and confident in their own way, and become fierce despisers of those who cannot own their interpretation of these scriptures? and thus the mind of God, the true meaning of the Scriptures, is not their rule; but an image which they have formed out of it; a meaning which their wit hath strongly imagined and fenced with arguments, and the real mind and intent of the Spirit is hid from them. So by this means many both deceive their own souls, and help to deceive the souls of others, missing of the plainness and simplicity of the Spirit, and gathering senses in the wit and subtlety of the fleshly part, where the serpentine wisdom lodgeth, and twines about the tree of knowledge. Now what do these men do? whom do they serve? and whither do they run themselves, and lead many other poor souls, whom they pretend to be helpful to save?

3. Consider whether ye did not flee from the cross, in your transplanting into New England, and so let up that part in you there, which should have been kept down by the cross here, and gave advantage to that spirit to get ground in you, which you outwardly fled from. The safety is in standing in God's counsel, in bearing the cross, in suffering for the testimony of his truth; but if at any time there be a fleeing of the cross (whether the inward or the outward) without God's direction, the evil spirit is thereby let in, his part strengthened, and the life weakened. That spirit which would save itself from the cross, is the same with that which would persecute that which will not save itself. Mark how sharply Christ speaks to Peter upon this account, when he would have tempted him to avoid the cross: "Get thee be-

hind me Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things of God," &c. Mat. xvi. 23. The seed offers up all to God in his service, will suffer anything for his name's sake, even the loss of liberty, goods, yea, life itself, for the testimony to the least truth. Now that which says to the seed, when sufferings come for the testimony of truth, "avoid it, save thyself; let not this be unto thee," or the like, that is Satan: and if Satan be not cast behind, but that counsel hearkened unto which leadeth from the cross, Satan is followed. And if ye fled your proper cross in your removal from hence unto New England, though you meet with many others there, yet hereby you lost your proper advantage of serving and honoring God in your generation; yea, ye lost that which would have kept your spirits tender, and open to the voice of God's spirit; and then no marvel if afterwards ye grew hard, and fit to persecute, who first had showed yourselves unfit and unworthy to suffer. Ye might meet with many crosses afterwards, which might neither be able to humble you, nor keep you tender, having once lost that cross which was appointed of God to do it: for all crosses do not break, humble, or keep the heart low and meek; but such as are sent and sanctified by God thereunto.

4. Consider, when ye came to New England, whether tenderness grew up in you, and was abundantly exercised towards such as might differ from you; or whether ye were as eager for the way that ye thought to be right, as the Conformists you fled from were for the way they thought to be right. When Israel came out of Egypt into their own land, they were to be tender even towards an Egyptian, much more towards their own brethren. Now when ye were out of danger of being persecuted yourselves, did ye lay a foundation of tender usage towards all that should differ from you; or did you lay a foundation of persecuting such as differ, and would suffer none differing from you, but persecute them, just as the bishops persecuted you? Did ye flee the having of yourselves persecuted; or did ye flee the persecuting spirit? For if ye did flee only your own persecutions, and not the persecuting spirit in yourselves, no

marvel though it fell a persecuting so soon as the fear of your own persecution was over. In this fleshly part there is a persecuting spirit, which if it be not kept down by the power of God, though it loves not to be persecuted, yet will soon be persecuting.

5. Did you feel yourselves grow in the inward life, upon coming into New England; or did that begin to flag and wither, and your growth chiefly consist in form and outward order, in which ye might easily be mistaken too? For many who have given a true testimony, and have been faithful in helping to pull down, yet have erred when they came to build up. That spirit which is kept low by persecution, and gives forth its testimony against things in fear and trembling, is many times exalted when it is out of persecution; and can weigh, debate, consider, and resolve things in that part which cannot build for God. Ephraim, under the rod, spake trembling; but the rod being off, he could exalt his own wisdom, and offend in Baal. That worship and way of government and order which a man takes up in the fleshly reason, and which fall in with the worldly interest, he serves not the true God in, but Baal. This it is that destroys and eats out the life of religion in many; namely, the mixing of it with their worldly interest: for then the offence of the cross ceases to them, and they begin to be offended at others on whom the cross is still laid by God, thinking that they may comply with them in joining their religion and worldly interest together, and so avoid the cross as well as they. Nay, he that will follow Christ, must take up the daily cross, even that cross which God daily lays upon him, who will still be requiring somewhat which is contrary to his own fleshly part, and contrary to the fleshly part of those with whom he converses. And as this cross is taken up, the worldly part is offended, and the life grows, cutting down worldly interests and ways of religion daily; but as worldly interests are followed and kept up, the fleshly part thrives, and the life decays and suffers, even till at length it come under death, and then death hath the dominion.

6. Consider whether your chief strength of setting up your church-government and order at first, and of bringing persons into it, and of preserving them in it, lies in the spirit and spiritual weapons, or in the flesh and carnal weapons. If in the spirit and spiritual weapons, then ye will be able, in God, to persuade men's consciences to it, and to preserve them by the same virtue and strength which persuaded them; and this ye will still have the main recourse to: but if in carnal, then ye will have recourse to the carnal; and there will be your main confidence of keeping up your church. For if it was built by that power, it must be upheld by that power; so that take that away, it falls. This is antichrist's strength; he sets up a form in the wisdom, and maintains it by the outward sword. Take him off from this, and put him to gaining ground by the demonstration of the spirit to men's consciences as in the sight of God, or to preserving his ground so, here he is at a loss, and his kingdom daily falls, even in the most refined parts of it. Let every church and people that nameth the name of Christ, depart from the ways of antichrist, and make the spirit of Christ their strength: for that is indeed the only strength of the true religion, both of the inward and outward part thereof; in that it begins, by that it is preserved, and there also it grows, and is perfected.

7. Consider (for it lies upon me to press it yet further, and lay it more home to you for your good) whether the persecuting spirit did not take its advantage of assaulting you, upon your getting from under the cross here, into New England; and whether it did not soon find a place in you there, and grow up in you, and bring you from step to step to that degree of hardness, that ye could at length even drink the blood of the saints.

That it was then the proper time for the persecuting spirit to seek to get an entrance into you, is very manifest; but whether it did get entrance or no, that belongs to you narrowly to search and examine. When ye were under the hatches, while ye yourselves were persecuted, then there was little room for that spirit in you; then was not a proper

time for your entertaining of it: but when ye were at liberty to choose a way and form of worship, then was a proper time for this temptation to prevail with you, of setting up your own way, as the chief or only way; and, under a pretence of zeal for God, to persecute the breakings-forth of his light in others. For it could not be expected that that spirit should directly tempt you (who had suffered so much by persecution) suddenly to become persecutors of others: but to hide its bait under a cover; and, under a pretence of zeal for God, his truths, and way of worship, to blind your eyes, and draw you aside into that which is indeed persecution of it. Sin is very deceitful, and seeks covers; and of all sins, persecution has the most need of covers, it is of so contrary a nature to the tender spirit of the gospel. Now when sin hath got its cover, then by degrees it hardens the heart, both from and against the truth. "Take heed," &c. saith the apostle, "lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Heb. iii. 12, 13. And persecution most hardens of any sin. How cruel, how bloody doth it make! it even unmans men! Prisons, whips, cutting off of ears, banishment, death, all is little enough, if not too little. And what reviling doth it fill men's pens and tongues with, making them so hot and passionate, that they cannot equally consider the cause; but misunderstand it, misrepresent it, and strive to make it appear another thing, both to themselves and others, than indeed in plain truth it is. Look over your writings, consider your cause again in a more meek and upright spirit, and ye yourselves will easily see how, in your heat, ye have mistaken, and dealt more injuriously with others, than ye yourselves were ever dealt with.

There is a time of righteous judgment, wherein the most inward covers shall be ripped off, and the sinner appear what he is; and then the persecutor shall bear that shame, that burden, that misery, which is the portion of that spirit. It is but a small advantage to it to cover its iniquity for a little moment. If ye could make all the world believe that ye are not persecutors, what would this profit you, if, in the day of the Lord, ye should be found such? But having pro-

ceeded thus far, it is hard for you to consider and retreat. That spirit hath too great advantage over you, to make you accept of any cover it can now offer you to hide yourselves under. Oh! that ye could see how ye have wrested scriptures, and what strange kind of arguments ye have formed, to make that which ye have done pass with your own hearts, and to make it appear somewhat plausible to others. Yet all this will not do; the eye of the Lord sees through you; and that light which ye reproach, makes you manifest to be at present in subjection under the bloody, dark power, who will hold you as long as he can, and furnish you with such weapons as he has, against the Lamb and his followers. But ye come forth to battle in a bad day, for the light is arisen to conquer, and is not now to be overcome with the darkness. And though ye meet the woman and her seed with a flood of reproaches and persecutions, yet that will not stop her from coming forth out of the wilderness, to show her beauty and innocency again in the earth. Consider these things, and come out of this hard spirit into tenderness, if it be possible, that the still, meek, gentle spirit of life may be your leader from under all false covers, into the truth itself; where there is a gentle lying down with all that is of God, and not so much as an offence because of any difference (much less heart-burnings and persecutions); but a sweet waiting on the Lord for every one's growth in their several ranks and stations.

Since my waiting on the LORD for the Presence and Guidance of his Spirit, in the examining the foregoing Grounds and Considerations, there came forth an Appendix to JOHN NORTON'S Book, wherein are laid down some further Grounds by way of justifying of their Proceedings; which, for their Sakes, and likewise on the Behalf of the Truth and People of GOD, I may also say somewhat to.

1. THEY insinuate an argument concerning "the not suf-

fering of evil, which" they say "is common to all that fear God, with themselves."

Ans. Evil is to be resisted; but in God's way, according to God's will, and not according to the will of the flesh. Spiritual evils are to be resisted (by and in the faith) with spiritual weapons, which God hath appointed and sanctified thereto. Earthly evils, outward evils, transgressions of the just law of the magistrate, are to be resisted by the sword of the magistrate. Here are the bounds which God hath set; which he that transgresseth, sinneth against the Lord and his own soul. But the believer is not to step out of God's way to resist the magistrate's evil, nor the magistrate to step out of God's way to resist spiritual evil; but both are to wait on the Lord for his blessing on the means he hath appointed; and it is better for each of them not to resist evil, but let it grow upon them till the Lord please to appear against it, than to overcome it by an unrighteous weapon. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots." Isa. xxxi. 1.

2. A second argument is taken from "the sole cause of (their) transplanting, which" they say "was to enjoy liberty, to walk peaceably in the faith of the gospel, according to the order of the gospel."

Ans. That there was an honest intent in many of them in transplanting into New England, I do not doubt; though whether they had a sufficient warrant from God to transplant, was doubted, and objected against them by many of their conscientious fellow-sufferers here in Old England, who testified to them that they did believe it to be their duty not to fly, but stay and bear their testimony for God and his truth by suffering: and this had been a better way of resisting that which was manifestly evil, than of resisting by the sword that for evil, which, in due time, they themselves may see and acknowledge not to have been so. But if they did truly desire liberty, did not the enemy tempt them to be selfish, to seek it so far as might comprise themselves, excluding such as might differ from them, upon as just grounds as they themselves differed from others? Did

not they set bounds to the truth, and bounds to the spirit of God, that thus far it should appear, and no further? Whereas God hath degrees of discovering and leading out of the antichristian darkness: and he that opposeth the next discovery of truth, the next step out of Babylon, is as real an enemy and persecutor, as he that opposed the foregoing. In that they testified against the bishops, they did well; but if they will now set up a stand, either to themselves or others, and not follow the leadings of the Lamb, their life may be withered, and they may perish in the wilderness, while others are following the guide, which they left (when they set up their stand), towards Canaan.

And as for *walking peaceably;* that they might be free from the fear of outward powers, having liberty to try whatever pretends to be of God; and if it appear error, be out of danger of having their consciences forced; this is a great mercy. But if they would live so peaceably as that no discovery of God further should ever start up among them, nor the Lord himself be suffered to send any of his servants with any further discovery of light unto them, this is not a peace which God allows to any man, nor which his people desire; but only the carnal part, which loves to be at ease, and not to be at the pains of trial in the fear of the Lord, of what comes forth in his name. And who walk thus, walk not in the faith, nor in the order of the gospel, which doth not suddenly reject any thing, but first thoroughly tries both doctrines and spirits, whether they be of God or no. He that rejects that which is of God cannot thrive or prosper in his spirit; and he that tries in the hastiness of the flesh, and not in the patience or meekness of the spirit, is in great danger of rejecting whatever of God appears.

But can they not enjoy their own liberty, and walk in the gospel, and manage the sword of the Spirit against errors and spiritual enemies (according to the order of the gospel), which is mighty through God to cut down the flesh, unless they get the magistrate's sword to cut down every appearance of truth (and every person holding forth any truth) but what they themselves shall own? Cannot the spirit of God

lead into further truth than they were led into when they went into New England? And may not the Lord take his own time to discover it to them, and to lead them into it? So that when first it appears, it may be hid from them; and will nothing serve them but the magistrate's sword to cut it down so soon as ever it appears? Did not the bishops of England think theirs to be the gospel order, and cried against the Non-conformists, that they could not live peaceably for them, but they disturbed the order of the church, and drew men's minds from matters of faith and edification? Surely the desire of such a kind of peace (as may stop the breaking forth of light to the people of God for their further leading out of Babylon) is not good. This is rather a fleshly ease, than true peace, which the Lord hath not allotted to his people; but they are to wait for the pouring down of his spirit, and the opening of the deep mysteries of his life in the latter days, and to try what comes forth in his name, whether it be of him or no, that they may not lose the good as it breaks forth, nor be deceived with the evil, as it gets into and appears in the shape and likeness of the good.

Now the drift of the argument lies in this, that *this liberty they cannot enjoy without a non-toleration of others.* Toleration of any but themselves, and their own way, disturbs their peace, their faith, their order.

Ans. The true liberty, the true faith, the true order of the gospel, was enjoyed formerly, without this power of suppressing others by carnal weapons, and violent laws. Yea, this power of suppressing others, and of compelling to a way of religion and worship, came up with antichrist; and that power which came up with antichrist, is not of Christ. "The dragon gave his power to the beast," Rev. xiii. 4. and another beast riseth up with "horns like a lamb," ver. 11. and this beast compelleth. ver. 12. Mark: the beast which appeared with horns like a lamb, as if it had Christ's power, and maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men (and who can deny these to be of God, that can do such things!) this very beast compelleth, or causeth to worship. as ver. 12. So this beast, which ap-

pears like a lamb, joins with the first beast whom it had set up under another appearance, and both compel to the worshipping of an image of the truth (of such an image of the truth as they think good to advance), and seduce from the truth itself. And he that will not be deceived with their image, with their likeness, with that which they call the truth and way of God, or order of the gospel, and so shall refuse to bow thereto, he shall not be permitted either to buy or sell. ver. 16, 17. There is no living as men within their bounds, unless they will bow to their image. But the true Lamb doth not compel, but calls to wait on the Father's drawings, till the Father by his spirit make willing. And though by the Lamb "kings reign, and princes decree justice," Prov. viii. 15. yet they never had any commission from him to force men to that way of religion and worship, to which the spirit of the Lord alone can make them willing, nor to fall upon them because they were unwilling. This is from the dragon, wherever it is found.

This then is the great matter of controversy, you account it your liberty not to tolerate; and here stands your peace and religion (which was a liberty the true Christians never had), and you cannot with patience bear any to testify against you; and so ye now fall upon any who come to witness against you, even as ye yourselves once suffered when ye were witnesses. But how can ye manifest that God shall reveal no truth, but what he reveals to you? Or if he does, that ye have liberty not to tolerate it, or the persons that hold it forth? Wherefore consider seriously whether this be a right liberty ye have aimed at: for if your aim hath been at a liberty which is not granted of God, at such a liberty as will not stand with the liberty of his spirit in his people, no marvel though ye have run into indirect means to attain it: and so from step to step have been led to the utmost degree of violence and persecution; and being engaged in it, are now forced to seek for arguments to maintain it. This argument is further enforced, by proposing "the inconsiderableness of the QUAKERS' suffering of a non-toleration," compared with "a manifest and greatest hazard of toleration

unto the country; their absence from hence is no detriment to them; their presence here threatens no less than the ruin of us all." &c.

Ans. As for outward detriment, the QUAKERS do not consider that in cases of this nature; but that in them which is born of God, hearing and receiving his command, presently obeys, waiting for his presence and power to carry through, and doth not at all mind the hardships to be met with. But the inward detriment, arising from disobedience to God, is very great; even the loss of his sweet presence, life, and power at present, besides the utter hazard of the soul: for that which draweth back from obedience to the spirit of the Lord, the Lord hath no pleasure in: and they have known the terrors of the Lord to the disobedient; therefore they may not please men in forbearing to go where he sends them; nor (standing in his counsel and power) do they fear them which can kill the body; but they exceedingly dread the death and loss of their souls, and him who hath the power thereof.

And as for their "presence threatening the ruin of all to you," that is but a misapprehension. It may indeed be ruin to that part in you which is wise and strong, without the presence of the life of God; but the elect, which is built upon the rock, cannot be ruined by any appearance of God; nay, nor by any appearance of the powers of darkness against God; *for the gates of hell cannot prevail against the true church.* And there is great advantage of errors and heresies to the true church; for the life grows and gets ground by a fair trial and overcoming of them, and the approved are thereby made manifest. 1 Cor. xi. 19. Now what kind of church is yours, which is in such danger of being ruined by that whereby the true church was advantaged? So that to plead that either you must suffer *your religion, your souls, your liberties to be made a prey of*, or take this course to defend them, is very inconsequent; and a strong argument against you that yours is not the truth, which needs such a defence as the truth hath not been used to have; but hath grown up,

been preserved, and thriven not only without it, but against the strength and force of it.

So likewise those considerations of the "shepherd's defending the flock from the wolves," and of the "keeper of the vineyard maintaining the hedge against the wild beasts," &c., are not proper to the thing in hand: for the spiritual sheep, the soul, the liberty of the church, the true religion, the true vineyard, are not outward, nor to be defended after an outward manner; but the defence is according to the nature of the thing which is to be defended. To trust or look after an outward power for defending these, is to betray the faith, which is the shield. Therefore let them consider whether, in looking out too much at these, they have not lost the true weapon, and the sight of the true thing which is to be defended, which the arm of the Lord alone gathers, and the arm of the Lord alone preserves.

This argument is yet further pressed from the present state of your own people, "too many of them being perilously disposed" as ye say "to receive their doctrine, being already too much disaffected, if not enemies to order," &c.

Ans. Alas! alas! have you had your order, your church-government so long up, and are the multitude among you yet so ready to be shaken? Behold what a weak, unstable settlement ye have attained to all this time by your outward force! but search honestly, and see who they are that are so ready to be shaken. Are they the "discontented, and unconscionable multitude?" (as ye speak) or are they the most simple-hearted, most conscientious, and zealous towards God amongst you? (For it is experienced here in Old England, that the ground they gain is not upon the unconscionable, but the conscientious). If it be these that are somewhat touched with the sense of their doctrine, it may make you fear that there is more of God therein than you are aware of. Therefore do not proceed to argue thus violently against a thing, before ye have tried it: but come to a deep, serious, inward consideration of the thing between God and your own souls: not in the pride, loftiness, and self-willedness; but in the honesty, humility, and meekness of

your spirits: and then perhaps ye may see beauty, and the life of your souls, in that which ye now so revile and persecute. And though ye matter not how ye imagine and speak all manner of evil falsely against us; yet do not also wrong the best among yourselves, by terming them "discontented and unconscionable," because their spirits are not hardened by your form; but yet retain some tenderness towards God, his truths, and people.

But why do ye charge following the light within so deeply, as to be "a giving up of men's selves to their own inclinations," and that it "immediately canonizeth them for saints, dischargeth them from subjection, both civil and sacred, and from the Scriptures as the rule of life; and by virtue of this their saintship, entitles to the estates and dignities of all who are not of their minds," &c.

Ans. Surely if ye were guided by the light within, ye would be preserved from such kind of injuriousness both to persons and principles. Are your tongues and pens your own, at liberty to speak and write any thing that will make for your advantage, how manifestly false soever? If it were but a natural light, yet, being of God, it would not deserve this deep blame. Have ye ever tried it, as we have done? If not, why do ye yet speak so against it, before ye have tried it? We can upon much experience testify, that it is against our inclinations; that it discovers them, calls from them, and is a daily cross to them; upon following whereof we feel the bitter dying of the earthly part, and the inclinations thereof pining away. And from true subjection to that which truly is of God, it never discharges; but leads to obedience to what is lawfully commanded by authority, and to patient suffering under what is unlawfully inflicted. And as for the Scriptures, it opens them in the life which gave them forth; it fulfils them in us; it makes them our own; it makes us able to set our seal to the truth of them in the sight of God; and to receive that for the rule which the Scriptures say is the rule, "the living word, Christ the living way, the word in the mouth, and in the heart," Rom. x. "the law in the mind, the law of the spirit

of life in Christ Jesus," which is *the word ingrafted* into their hearts, who are created anew in Christ. And this is the honor which we give to the Scriptures, namely, to receive that which they testify of; to live and walk in that spirit which they call to us to live and walk in: to take heed of painting the old nature, and letting the old spirit live upon its imaginations, which it gathers out of the Scriptures, reading them in the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness of the spirit. And we profess nakedly that we believe the truth of God, not merely because the Scripture hath said it (for that which is out of the truth may thus believe); but also because, in coming to the thing, and receiving the truth as it is in Jesus, we have found it to be just as the Scriptures speak of it. But what do ye speak, as if following the light did entitle men to the estates and dignities of all who are not of their mind? Nay, the light teacheth not to covet, not to desire, earthly dignities or estates. Let it be looked at over Old England: which of us so much as mind these things? Nay, the Lord knows that the love of these things is daily rooted out of our hearts more and more, and we are a people whom the world cannot charge with covetousness, or love of the world, wherewith all sorts of professors hitherto have been too justly chargeable. O rulers of New England! why do you thus overturn the cause of the innocent? If we were a bad people, yet to lay things so notoriously false to our charge, and to charge that principle in us with it, which powerfully leads us from it, this is not right nor justifiable in the sight of God. Ah! take heed of reviling, persecuting, and speaking all manner of evil against us falsely, for his name's sake whom we are called to serve, and whom we do serve in following and obeying the light of his spirit in us, which hath led us to the true knowledge of God, and to life and peace with him.

About the close of this argument, for the further strengthening of it, it is said, "duty is not opposite to duty: passiveness for the truth, and activeness against the enemies of truth, are both duties in their season."

Ans. Every kind of activeness against the enemies of the truth is not duty; for some kind is sinful. There is a lawful fighting, and an unlawful fighting. Such a kind of fighting against an enemy as may hurt a friend, and cannot hurt the enemy, is unlawful. Now the magistrate's sword may hurt a friend, may affright the tender conscience from its duty towards Christ; but it cannot reach the falsehood which lodgeth in the heart, nor draw the party from that, but rather hardeneth him in it: so that it is not a duty to have the magistrate's sword drawn out against that for which it is not proper, where it may do hurt, and not good. The householder would not permit his own servants to gather up the tares, lest they should root up the wheat with them. Mat. xiii. 29. Did Christ deny his disciples that liberty, and doth he grant it to the magistrate? Is the magistrate out of danger of hurting the wheat, while he is smiting at the tares? Nay, is he not in danger of smiting and rooting up the wheat instead of the tares? Surely this is the magistrate's duty, to keep in his place, and not to extend his sword beyond his commission, and beyond what it is proper for. And let me put this to all the magistrates of the earth, who have been drawing out their sword against tares (as they might think), "are ye sure that ye never touched any green thing?" Rev. ix. 4. *Did ye never pluck up any wheat?* Ye must give an account of this to Christ one day. Here in Old England, in the bishops' days, they were liable to be excommunicated and weeded out of the church, and also be struck at by the magistrate: how it hath been in New England, I leave it to your consciences to consider of, do not slubber it over, but make up a just account.

What Moses did Levit. xxiv. in case of blasphemy, he did by immediate direction from God, ver. 13. and he was a type of Christ, who inwardly and spiritually fulfils all his outward shadows. And Christ doth not say that every blasphemer under the gospel shall be put to death, but all blasphemy or speaking against the Son of man shall be forgiven; but there is a kind of blasphemy which he will not forgive.

And the church, by his Spirit, are to try and deal with blasphemers, even to the cutting of them off, by the sword of the Spirit, that they may repent, and "learn not to blaspheme;" 1 Tim. i. 20. but the magistrate is not now appointed to cut them off in their blasphemy, and so to take away that time of repentance from them, which Christ hath allowed them. Christ's ordinances and institutions do not clash one with another; he doth not bid the church cut off a person from the unity, with the sword of the Spirit, that he might feel the loss of life, and be made sensible of what a condition his blasphemies have brought him to, and so come to mourn and repent, I say Christ doth not do this on the one hand, and, on the other hand, bid the magistrate banish him, or cut him off with the sword, and so take away his time of repentance from him. Nay, this device sprung from the false church, to make her excommunication outwardly terrible and dreadful, which hath no inward virtue, or cause of terror and dread at all in it.

So as touching Nehemiah, he was both extraordinarily stirred up by God, and his time was under the law; so that the argument from his example is not valid to them, who have not such a warrant as he had (for he saith himself, that God had put in his heart what he had to do at Jerusalem. Neh. ii. 12.), and where the state and ministration is changed. The priests did that under the law, which is not now to be done, but typified what Christ, the unchangeable Priest, was to do; so likewise kings, judges, and governors of that people, did that under the law towards them, which is not now to be done outwardly towards any, by any king, ruler, or magistrate; but typified what Christ was inwardly to do in the spirits of his people, and how he would gather, preserve, and defend his church, and wound and subdue his enemies, even by his rod and sceptre, which is the sword of his Spirit, the word of his mouth.

And as for Ephesus and Thyatira's not suffering false apostles and the woman Jezebel; we do not say that any errors, or erroneous persons, are to be suffered by the church, but to be dealt with in Christ's power and authority. But the

delivering up of these to the secular power, we know to have been an invention of antichrist's, and a great dishonor to Christ (as if his rod and sceptre were not sufficient to defend his subjects and kingdom, and to beat down his enemies), and also a ground of much affliction, persecution, and blood-shed of the saints; yea, and of suppressing the truth of God for a season. For the persecutor having once gotten his cover, then he can do that openly and boldly, which otherwise he would blush and be ashamed of. To persecute Christ, to put his people to death, and that for professing and publishing his truths; God forbid, saith the antichristian spirit (in every form and way of religion), that we should do this; but in every age calls the witnesses to the truth (of that age) blasphemers, wicked persons, persons that by their tenets overthrow the fundamental truths of the gospel, and their doctrines destructive, &c. And now what zealous people or minister, or what Christian magistrate, can suffer such as these? By this artifice, the sufferings of the saints come to abound in every age, and their blood is made havoc of: and what is thus done, easily passeth as an act of justice against offenders, and not (as indeed it is) persecution of the truths and people of God. The after age can see what it is, and cry out against it: but still it is the subtlety of the persecuting spirit to hide the persecutions of the present age, under an appearance of zeal for God, and of justice against offenders.

3. In the next place it is said, on the QUAKERS' behalf, that *they are the lambs of Christ.*

Indeed this is a considerable thing; for if they be Christ's lambs, then they are innocent, and cannot be the causers of their own sufferings; but that will rest upon their persecutors, though they use ever so much art to make the lambs appear guilty, and themselves guiltless; their spirit, nature, manner of fighting (which is with lamb-like weapons, which hurt not flesh and blood), their whole course and conversation, and manner of suffering, &c., manifest them to be lambs; this is of much more force than a bare saying they are lambs. None of this is mentioned on their behalf, but

only that they say they are lambs. But let us see how fairly that is overthrown.

Against this, that place, John v. 31. is alleged; "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true:" whereupon it is said thus, *Had not Christ been God, the reason of the Jews had been good against him.*

Ans. Doth not the spirit of God dwell in the sons of God? And doth not the spirit of God bear witness in them that they are his children? And is not this witness true? John saith, "We know that we are of God." 1 John v. 19. Was not this witness true in John, because John was not God? Was not the prophets' testimony true (that they were his prophets, and that God had sent them, and that it was his message which they brought), because they were not God? Shall the spirit of God work wonders in the heart? and shall he not testify concerning his own work at his pleasure? Ah, friends! how do ye understand scripture, and raise inferences from it, thus to condemn the generation of the righteous? Search the Scriptures: do not the prophets still testify that the Lord sent them, and that it was his word which they spake? though they themselves were not God, but persons moved by the spirit of God; who stirred in his servants under the law, but dwelleth, resteth, and abideth in his people under the gospel; and what he testifieth is true, though fleshly-wise Israel (who seem to themselves very skilful in the law and letter of the Scriptures) could not receive his testimony either then or now. Ah! friends! ye had need take heed and consider, lest the bastardly birth in you hath taken up a habitation in the letter, without knowing the mind of the spirit, whose presence killeth the carnal part, and shutteth out the wisdom of the flesh from meddling with the Scriptures.

And whereas you seem to refer "all to the trial of the Scripture," both station, doctrine, and practice; surely if ye had done so in truth, ye would have more patiently heard their testimony according to the Scriptures. Every man pretendeth Scripture, but none truly honoreth it, but they who are guided by that Spirit which it testifieth of. And

they who are not guided by that Spirit, walk not according to the Scriptures, but according to reasonings of the fleshly part, which windeth itself into the letter of the Scriptures, that by some conformity thereto, it may avoid the dint of the Spirit. And this is the way of antichrist's prevailing, by getting the form, crying up that, winding his own fleshly spirit into that, and sheltering itself under that. Thus the Jews cried up the temple of the Lord, the sabbath, the law of Moses, and writings of the prophets; and under this cover, with great zeal persecuted Christ; he was looked upon as a blasphemer, as one against God's temple, his sabbath, his ordinances, &c. And since the days of Christ, the antichristian spirit speaks great words of Christ; his death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, &c., and of church order, and discipline, that, under this cover, it may fight against the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; who alone can lead into truth, and which is the proper way of God's ministration since Christ's ascension. And this hath been the way of opposing truth ever since, and still is: and here is the antichrist, he that holds these in the wrong part, and by these fights against the true Spirit.

But if there be any truth in this, that ye are willing to be tried by the Scriptures, let it yet come to a fair trial this way, and let them have free liberty to manifest among you, what they have to say from the Scriptures; why your church, your ministry, your order and government, your whole way of teaching and worship is not of God, nor according to the Scriptures, but an invention and imitation, set up in the way of resemblance of what once was truly so. If this cannot be made good against you, ye will have much advantage of shaming them, and of settling your people much firmer than by prisons, whips, cutting off of ears, banishment, and death; which no man's heart (seriously considering it in true soberness) can possibly believe to be the proper engines of settling or preserving the gospel of peace.

But that the Scripture is the rule of trial under the gospel, I read not in Scripture; but that the things of the Spirit are to be known in and by the Spirit. 1 Cor. ii. 12.

The Apostle John, speaking of antichrists, seducers, and erring spirits, which were to be tried, doth not bid them try them by the words which he wrote, or by the other apostles' words, or by the prophets' words; but by the anointing; which keeping close to, they need fear no seducers. 1 John ii. 26, 27. The Word which was in the beginning being received, abode in, and kept close to, tries all words and spirits. That which begets to God is the Spirit; the great gift (which is given to him who is begotten) is the Spirit; and this (being given) is to become the fountain of life to the believer. John vii. 38. And in this spring of life he is to live, and receive milk and knowledge; and here he is to walk, and here he is to try all other waters, even by this water. And this is more to a believer, and more enableth him to try, than all the words of truth that ever were written; though he that hath this cannot despise or undervalue any thing that the Spirit ever wrought; but yet the Spirit itself is more to him, and more certain, then any words concerning the Spirit. Men may make false glosses, and mud, and make void the Scriptures by their reasonings, and interpretations, and traditional apprehensions; but this water ever runs fresh and clear, and no foul spirit can defile it. Moses gave the law, which directed to, and ended in, Christ: Christ in the flesh finished the work which the Father gave him to do, and directed to the Comforter to be the leader into all truth, yea, the spring of life to the believer; and here the believer is safe: but the antichristian spirit ravening from this, cries up the letter in the stead of this, and doth not see how the letter points to and centres in this. "God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament" (saith the apostle); "not of the letter, but of the spirit." 2 Cor. iii. 6. He overlooked the letter: that was not the thing he was chiefly to minister, but the Spirit, the power, to turn men from darkness to light, that they might feel him that is true, and have the life eternal abiding in the heart: but now, in the antichristian darkness, the spirit being lost, which is the gospel-administration, they seemingly advance and cry up the letter, putting it into the place of the Spirit.

Yet in truth it is not the Scripture either, in its naked simplicity, which is thus cried up, but man's wise reasonings about it. The fleshly will, the fleshly understanding, the fleshly strength getting a seat there, having formed a building out of it, and reared strong-holds in that part which can be wise, and live without the Spirit; now its life, its interest, lies in the Scripture thus believed, thus understood, thus practised: thus therefore it cries it up, not as it came at first out of the hands of the Spirit, nor as the truth of it is now seen in the simplicity and nakedness of the Spirit, but as the wisdom from below hath formed meanings and apprehensions concerning it. And here every sort of men are wise in their own eyes, and strong and prudent in their own conceivings and reasonings, but know not the bringing to naught of that understanding, which precedeth the opening of the eye of the babe, which hath that sight of the things of God given it, which is out of the reach of all the wise and strong ones. It is true, under the law they were to try by the law and the testimony, Isa. viii. 10. but yet not in an uncertain way, according to their own guessings, imaginations, and reasonings, but according to a certain interpretation and knowledge thereof; and in cases of difficulty the judge was to have recourse to the priest. Deut. xvii. 8, &c. And the priest, in cases of doubt, had an ordinary way of inquiring by Urim, Numb. xxvii. besides the way of inquiring by prophets, which was very common with them also. 1 Sam. ix. 9. xxviii. 6. But now the Jews having forfeited these, and filling their minds with a gathered knowledge from the law and prophets, trying Christ and his truths by this, judged amiss both of him and them. Now the law was a shadow of good things to come; not a shadow of another outward law or rule, but a shadow of the inward rule, of the law of the new covenant written in the heart, of the Spirit put within, Heb. viii. and by this law is the true believer fully as able to try, as they were by the former; but without this, a Christian's trial of things is not so certain as theirs was under the law.

4. The force of the fourth argument is to this effect,

"That the dictate of the conscience is not a sufficient plea in case of mere and single ignorance, much less in wilful and affected ignorance."

Ans. The dictate of conscience is not made a plea by us; but the answering and obeying the light of Christ in our consciences, is that which keepeth them void of offence, both towards God and towards men. Now it is one thing for a man to act evil, and plead it is his conscience; and it is another thing for a man to be guided by the infallible Light of the Spirit; or if he be not come so far, yet to be made tender in his heart towards Christ concerning his practices in religion. In this last case we say, that in things, whose good or evil chiefly depends upon the knowledge and persuasion of the mind, which Christ alone can do, here Christ is the sole Lord and judge of the conscience, Rev. xiv. 4. and not either minister, church, or magistrate. Christ giveth knowledge, Christ increaseth knowledge, and Christ requireth obedience according to the knowledge given or increased. That is many times required to be left, upon a further degree of knowledge given, which was not required to be left before; and so also upon the same terms may things be required to be performed, which were not required to be done before. And this, indeed, is the very sum of the true religion (since the death of Christ, and his finishing of his work here), either to worship in the Spirit, or to wait for the Spirit. He who hath not received the Spirit, he is to wait for the Spirit. He who hath received the Spirit, he is to wait in the Spirit for the movings and outgoings thereof, and to be obedient thereto. And Christians are to take heed, not only of a wrong spirit, but also of quenching the movings of the true Spirit in themselves or others. If the erring mind hath mistaken about worship, and through its mistake set up a wrong way, the Spirit in the tender plants will be moving against it, which the wise, reasoning, fleshly part will be knocking down; and so the birth, which is after the flesh, will be getting advantage of, persecuting, and keeping under the immortal seed. Now suppress evil to the utmost, but take heed of quenching the

good in any; take heed how ye stop that in its course of discovering evil (in your worships, or otherwise) which easily passeth for good, until the Spirit begin to make it manifest. Ah! friends! if the carnal wisdom had been crucified in you, and the spirit of God had had more scope in manifesting evil among you, what might ye have grown to ere this day! But if the magistrate upon every doubt, or difference, or startling of the tender conscience, step in with his sword, how is the way of the breaking forth of truth stopped up! And that which is truly of God, and most tender towards him, is most liable to suffer this way. And this is that which makes the QUAKERS such a suffering people, because they have found the benefit of keeping the conscience tender towards God, and so prize it above all things; and this mercy have they received from the Lord, sensibly to distinguish (in this tenderness towards God, and in the fear of his name) between the dictates of conscience, and the voice of his spirit there. Now it is not at all pleaded by us, that under a pretence of conscience, ye should suffer all manner or any manner of evil: but first, *Punish not good for evil:* do not punish the good in others, to defend the evil in yourselves. Secondly, *That which is manifestly evil, punish it by such hands and means as God hath appointed;* the spiritual by spiritual, the temporal by temporal; and do not make punishing of evil a pretence of persecuting good in others, and of upholding the evil in yourselves.

But as touching your distinction of mere and single ignorance, or wilful and affected, we can bless the Lord who hath delivered us from them both, by the day-spring which he hath caused to arise in our hearts; and we can with a further measure of the same spirit bear this from you, with a measure whereof some of the Non-conformists bore this from the Conformists, who would cast this upon them, that their ignorance was affected, they were refractory, but might have been better informed if they would. And we wish with all our hearts, that there were not too just cause of retorting both parts of this distinction back upon you; for if ye had not been very grossly ignorant, ye could never

have thus put darkness for light, and light for darkness, casting such odious reproaches upon the truth, to make it appear what it was not. Had ye not been ignorant of the scripture, ye would have known the movings of the life and spirit of it in others; but through ignorance of the eternal power, and from your dark reasonings and conceivings about the letter, ye are ready to call Christ Beelzebub; not knowing the anointing in the members, no more than the Scribes and Pharisees did in the head. And had not your ignorance also been too much affected, ye would have taken more pains about the trial, and not have run into such mistakes all along, both about them and their doctrines, as ye have done.

That Christ referred himself either to Pilate's or the Jews' trial of him by Scriptures, is a gross mistake at best. The Jews did try him by Scriptures; and according to their understanding thereof, found him a sabbath-breaker, against Moses' law, and that he could not be the Messiah, John vii. 27. 52. xii. 34. but by their law ought to die. John xix. 7. There is no trying of the things of God by considering of Scriptures in the carnal mind, in the wise, reasoning part; but in the Spirit which wrote the Scriptures, in the understanding which God gives, 1 John v. 20. in the wisdom which is bestowed on the babe (who lives in the simplicity and pure innocency that is in Christ), there the truth itself, and also the Scriptures (which testify of it) are clear. Now Christ did not refer himself to them to be tried by the Scriptures (for he knew what was in man, and he knew after what manner they would try him thereby); but he bid them "search the Scriptures," which testified of him, that so they might come to know and receive him, John v. 39, 40. and none knew him, but those to whom the Father revealed him.

So the case of Paul's appealing to Cæsar doth not prove that Cæsar was a proper judge in cases of conscience; but he was, at that time, a proper defence against the malice of the Jews, who most unconscionably persecuted Paul, under a pretence of zeal for God, and defence of their church and ordinances. And were ye not in power, but an equal

heathen magistrate over us both, the QUAKERS durst refer their cause to trial, that they have done you injury, no more than Paul did the Jews. Indeed Paul preached that which was the end of the law, and the overturning of the Jewish state: and if their priests and rulers had had him to judge, they would have made him as great an offender as ye now make the QUAKERS. Now if your religion stand upon such a bottom as theirs did, and not upon the Rock, in the faith, and by the Spirit, ye may well fear us; it is not without a cause; for this we certainly know, that all professions of God and of Christ, imitations and practices from the letter, which stand in man's will and wisdom, will not be able to abide the breath of this suffering seed, who love the testimony of Jesus, and service to his name, above their lives.

And as for an "erring conscience," there lies the dispute, whose conscience errs, yours or theirs? Ye say they have erred from the letter, the order, and ordinances of the gospel: they say ye have erred from the Spirit, and therefore must needs have erred from the letter also (and this they are ready to prove according to the Scriptures, if ye dare stand to a fair trial). And also that ye are in a knowledge, faith, worship, wisdom, &c., which stand in the will and carnal part, and keep the carnal part alive. This deserves a meek and serious consideration in the fear of Him who can destroy the soul; and not such a bloody and fiery trial, as your proceedings and writings too much savor of.

5. *That a regular defence of the truth by the godly orthodox magistrate, and others respectively, is not persecution.*

Ans. To bring the sword of the magistrate into the work of Christ's Spirit and power, this is irregular; and it doth execution irregularly, cutting down the person, and not the sin; whereas, the sword of the Spirit cuts down the sin, that the person may be saved. Christ came not to destroy men's lives, but to save; and if any man receive him not, or speak against him, he calls not for fire from heaven, or for a magistrate's sword, but waits to be gracious, and by the power of his Spirit (having once convinced and gathered) doth he defend his truths and people. Let but the magistrate stand

still with his sword, the Spirit of Christ will soon get the victory over error; and a sweeter and a better victory than the magistrate's sword can effect. Truth sprung up without the magistrate's sword: yea, against it. So it grew, and so it conquered. The magistrate's sword here (though ever so favorable to truth) doth more hurt than good, putting the true sword out of his place, and keeping down that tenderness of spirit, wherein the truth alone can spring.

That coercion was instituted for restraining of evil, we grant, (this is the same with the first argument:) but he that appointed two kinds of coercion, set each their limits, which they are not to transgress. See the answer to the first argument.

But whereas ye say, that "tares and ill weeds need no more than being let alone to over-run and spoil the corn;" that is directly contrary to Christ, who said expressly, "Let both grow together until the harvest." Matt. xiii. 30. Surely he would not have his wheat in danger of being destroyed all the time till harvest; but he judged that plucking up the tares would more endanger the wheat, than letting them alone. ver. 29. Man may easily mistake, and pluck up an ear of wheat, instead of a tare; and better it were to let many tares alone, than pluck up one ear of wheat. Ye have long been busied in New England about plucking up tares. Are ye sure ye never plucked up any wheat? Nay, have ye not weeded out the wheat, and left the tares standing? Undertaking a work so directly contrary to Christ's direction (and so without the guidance of his Spirit), ye might easily thus err. Now what the tares are, is afterwards expounded: they are such persons as grow among the wheat, but are not wheat; but are to be gathered from the wheat with Christ's sickle, and bound up in bundles for the burning, in the day of his harvest.

Your comparisons of a gangrene, and the like, I wish you knew how to apply. The power of God's truth in the spirits of his people is no gangrene; but the form without the power is a gangrene, and, like Pharoah's lean cattle, soon eats up the fat. And he who has lost his own tenderness

and freshness, soon turns persecutor of such as remain tender, and seek to preserve their freshness.

In the days of the apostles there was *a king in Israel;* then the church was well governed, in the meekness and sweet authority and power of Christ's Spirit, which hurts not creatures, but strikes at Christ's enemy in creatures. Since that time, the Papists have had a long day of doing what was right in their eyes; the Episcopalians, a day after them, of doing what was right in their eyes; and so the Presbyterians and Independents, &c. But it were better for them all to lament after the right king, than to set up an usurped authority in his absence. Carnal reason, the wisdom of the flesh, hath got his seat, giving forth his meaning of scripture, and so (under a color of them) ruling over his flock with force and cruelty, and not with the meek, gentle, righteous sceptre of his Spirit, which alone is appointed of Christ to govern them.

So then the magistrate's punishing of the QUAKERS is not regular by any institution of Christ; but only by a law of their own making, as it is further explained, p. 95. of this Appendix; the grounds whereof have been already examined and found insufficient to warrant them therein; which I leave to themselves, and to every man's conscience, to consider of, in the dread of God, the judge of all.

Upon the result of all, it may not be amiss to state the case between the governors of New England and the Quakers, which is briefly thus:

If the governors of New England had just cause to make such a law against the Quakers, and had a true, rightly-derived power so to do from God, who is the spring of all just power; and if the Quakers had liberty from the Lord to choose or refuse obedience to it, then their suffering death is justly to be imputed to themselves.

But if the governors of New England had not a just cause of making this law, nor authority and power from God so to do; and the Quakers had not liberty to choose or refuse coming thither, but had an indispensable command from Christ, their Lord; then their sufferings and blood will rest

on the heads of the governors of New England, and will stick closer to them than to be wiped off by such kind of arguments and reasonings.

All depends upon your first step of proceeding. If that was without due ground, not in the fear of the Lord, without Christ's allowance and direction; without having duly weighed the thing in the true, unerring balance, but rather in the hastiness and stiff resolvedness of the flesh; then all your proceedings since have been but aggravations of your sin; and God might justly let you go on thus far, to shame you even in the sight of the very heathen, among whom the sense and abhorrence of this cruel and bloody spirit cannot but make your profession of the gospel of peace become a reproach.

The Quakers came to you in the name of the Lord, to discover from him to you the evil of your ways; to convince you by his light of your departing from that which was persecuted in you in the times of your sufferings in Old England: but ye would not meekly hear and consider of what they had to say to you from the Lord; but presently imprisoned and sent them away; and so proceeded further and further against them, till at length ye came to drink their blood. So that in truth their testimony is the cause of their death; and judge in your own hearts whether this be not a persecution of a deep dye. It were better for you to charge it upon your own hearts, than to have the Lord charge it upon you, when you come to stand before him to be eternally judged.

There remains yet another Paper (printed here in England) called, "A True Relation of the Proceedings against certain QUAKERS, at the General Court of Massachusetts, holden at Boston in New England, October 18th, 1659."

THE arguments therein, whereupon they would have their proceedings pass for just, and not be accounted persecution, are these: "The authority of this court, the laws of the

country, the laws of God, and their gradual procee lings."

Ans. Persecutors are very seldom (if at any time) without these pleas for themselves. Had not the bishops as fair a right to this plea, to cover their persecutions of the Non-conformists with? Could not they, in their day, have alleged the authority of their courts, the laws of their country (perhaps some not made directly to entrap either, as yours were), and had not they as confident a pretence to the law of God as these? And did not they also proceed gradually? He that doubteth, let him read HOOKER'S "*Ecclesiastical Polity*," and other writings of the Conformists, and see whether their spirit was not more mild and Christian-like and their arguments more weighty by far, than those which these have used against the QUAKERS. Nay, have the very Papists themselves been without these arguments? Did they not proceed gradually in Queen Mary's days against the martyrs? Yea, what pains did they take to convince them of their heresies, and to bring them into the unity of the true church, as they accounted it! But these arguments did not justify the Papists or Conformists in the sight of God (though they might justify their proceedings in the eyes of their own party); nor will they justify them to have gone one step beyond the Conformists. But as the spirit of persecution entering into the bishops and Conformists was the same spirit, as well when it was in them as in the Papists; so the same spirit entering into the Non-conformists, is the same spirit still in them, as it was in the bishops and Conformists. And the plea of the authority of their court, the laws of the country, with such a kind of pretence to the law of God, and their gradual proceedings, is no more, in truth and reality, a shelter for them, than it was for the other; though they, in their day, look upon it as a good and sufficient cover, even as the bishops did in their day, and the Papists in their day. Had they wanted this cover, the nakedness of their zeal and profession would have appeared to every eye: yea, their own consciences could not but have flown in their faces, had they put them to death so soon as ever they had come over, without any foregoing proceed-

ings. But this is the nature of the persecuting spirit; first it seeks a cover to stop the mouth of its own conscience, and to hide its blood-thirsty actions from the eye of the world; and then its feet are swift to shed the blood of the innocent. But the same Lord God of truth and righteousness, who hath unmasked the Papists, and unmasked the bishops, will unmask these also, and their nakedness shall more appear than the others', who would hide themslves and their own cruelty with that covering, which they themselves have judged in others. It is not therefore any of these, but the grounds of their proceedings must manifest them to be just; or else, notwithstanding the pretence to justice, their whole course of proceedings will prove in truth (and according to righteous judgment) but persecution.

Now the Grounds of their Proceedings they mention to be these:

1. "Their having received intelligence from good hands from Barbadoes and England, of the pernicious opinions and practices of the QUAKERS."

2. "Their professed tenets" (how well you have acquitted yourselves herein, let all that fear God judge).

3. "Their turbulent and contemptuous behavior to authority."

4. "Their designs to undermine and ruin the order and peace here established."

Ans. He that is willing to receive shall never want intelligence against the truths and people of God, even from such hands as he will be ready to call good (It is a remnant only that receive truth; the generality of professors in all ages are still ready both to send and receive intelligence against all the living appearances of it, and of God's witnesses to it). Nor can he who hath already entertained prejudices ever want matter against their tenets, behavior, or to charge them with designs. Have not these reproaches always been cast upon every appearance of God? Are not the vessels he chooses to hold forth his truths by still repre-

sented as persons of pernicious opinions and practices, their tenets charged to be wicked, and they looked upon as turbulent and contemptuous &c.? Were not the Non-conformists themselves looked upon as persons that would undermine and ruin the order and peace of the church; who for such trivial things would make such great rents and breaches, marring the beauty, and disturbing the unity, order, and peace of the church of England? Surely they cannot yet forget this, besides that common charge against them of contumacy against authority. These are but the old weapons of the old serpent (only a little new furbished by you for your own use), even the weapons which the bishops wrested out of the hands of the Papists, and which ye have wrested out of the hands of the bishops, and they are no better in your hands than they were in theirs. They were good in their hands, so long as they had authority to make them forcible: and they have no more virtue in your hands, than what outward authority and power add to them. England was once overflown with this flood of reproaches; but now at length (this afflicted people waiting in patience on the Lord's will) they have much vanished, the earth helping the woman: and persons generally, who are any whit sober, and come to consider things in fear and meekness, find no such matter against them; no such opinions or practices or tenets, but the truths of God received and held forth in his fear; their carriage and behavior meek and humble, void of turbulency, and contempt towards any, and they freer from designs against authority and orderly government, than any sort else whatsoever. This is well known in England, and it cannot be denied by the authorities and powers thereof, how we have still been like lambs suffering from all, not contriving, or so much as desiring, the hurt of any. The Lord knows the desire of our souls to be after truth and righteousness, and our expectations for the establishing thereof to be fixed on him alone, and not on any persons whatsoever, but as he pleaseth to appear in them, and work by them; and whatsoever happens in the mean time, is received as from his hand, who ruleth on high over all: so

that our spirits do not so much as rise against any authority or instruments that persecute us; but we wait on the Lord our God, to advantage his truth, and bring about good to us thereby; and we pity and pray for all who know not what they do; blessing the Lord our God, who accounteth us worthy to suffer for his name's sake, in bearing testimony at his command to any, though it should be but the least of his truths. Therefore take heed of going on in the hardness of your hearts, but know what a people (in the just judgment of God upon you) your lot hath been to persecute; whose blood will stick the closer to you, and lie so much the heavier upon you, by how much the dearer they are to God.

And though ye plead *the safety of the people*, as being *the sovereign law;* yet the Lord God knows whether ye have aimed at the safety of the people among you in uprightness of heart, or whether ye bring this in also as a further cover. There is a double safety the people may justly challenge from you. First, *The safety of their consciences in a tender searching after truth, and further removing out of Babylon.* Secondly, *The safety of their estates, persons, and liberties, in this search.* They did not fly from England to be persecuted by the prevailing part among themselves, but to enjoy freedom of conscience in inquiring after the Lord, his truth, and way of worship; and not to be tied and bound up in a form, exalted and established according to the opinions and result of the reasonings of the major part. Now whether ye have preserved these liberties for them, and really sought their safety; or whether ye have persecuted, or made a prey of them for their conscience' sake (beyond whatever was done to you here in England, or beyond whatever they had been like to suffer, had they staid here in England), the Lord, in his day, will righteously judge. Ye have judged between cattle and cattle; the Lord also will judge between cattle and cattle: and in that day ye will see, that as his choice have been your out-casts, so your choice is rejected by him; and that as his spirit is the abomination of your eyes, so your formal way of worship is the loathing of his soul. Oh,

that ye had eyes to see it! that your hearts might not be utterly hardened against the Lord, his truths, and people, even to your utter and eternal destruction! Little do ye see, poor deceived hearts, what a narrow step there is between you and the pit.

The Authority and Government which Christ excluded out of his Church, &c.

Mat. xx. Ver. 25 to 29.

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Here Christ cuts off that power and authority which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, which was ever and anon springing up even in the disciples. Here he wholly excludes it out of the church, and says expressly he would have no such thing among them; no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority. Among the Gentiles there are great ones, there are princes; and these great ones, these princes, they lord it over the inferior ones, exercising authority and dominion over them; "but it shall not be so among you."

The Gentile-state was a shadow, even as the Jews' state was a shadow. The one of death, the other of life; the one of darkness, the other of light. The one was the image of Satan, the prince of wickedness; the other of Christ, the prince of righteousness and peace. They were both veils, under which the two kingdoms were hid.

Now in the Gentile-state there were nations, princes, laws, governments, dominions, authorities, &c., but all in the fall,

all in darkness, all in the transgression from the life. The whole state was corrupt, and there must be no imitation from hence, no likeness of any such thing in the kingdom of Christ, no such kind of law, no such kind of government, no such kind of authority, no such kind of anger with persons that transgress, no such kind of dealing with any, no such kind of detriment or hurt to any. *There is nothing to hurt in the mountain of God's holiness;* but there is a righteous sceptre, a sweet sceptre, a spiritual sceptre, which reacheth the spirit in the power of life, but toucheth not the outward man.

Two things are here excluded by Christ, from whence all the mischief ariseth in the church (all the tyranny and oppression of men's consciences, and of their persons, estates, and liberties, for conscience' sake): first, *greatness;* secondly, the *exercising dominion and authority* by those that would be great therein.

Such a kind of greatness as is in the world, is the destruction of the life of Christ; and such a kind of dominion and authority as is among the nations, is the direct overturning of the kingdom of Christ. It sets up another power than Christ's, another greatness than Christ's, another kind of authority than Christ's; and so it eats out the virtue and life of his kingdom, and makes it just like one of the kingdoms of this world.

"It shall not be so among you." This spirit must be kept out from among you; this aspiring spirit, this lofty, ruling spirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itself, because of the gift it has received, and would bring others into subjection; this spirit must be subdued among Christ's disciples, or it will ruin all. The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others because of it. And he that, because of this, thinks himself fit to rule over men's consciences, and to make them bow to what he knows or takes to be truth, he loseth his own life hereby; and so far as he prevails upon others, he doth but destroy their life too. For it is not so much speaking true

things that doth good, as speaking them from the pure, and conveying them to the pure: for the life runs along from the vessel of life in one, into the vessel of life in another; and the words, though ever so true, cannot convey life to another, but as the living vessel opens in the one, and is opened in the other.

Quest. *But how shall this spirit be kept out, or kept down, that it may not hurt the disciple in whom it ariseth: or if it do, that the hurt may remain to himself, and may not prejudice the church?*

Ans. When this spirit begins to arise up in any, so soon as ever he perceives it, in that which discovers it, he is to fight against it; laying himself so much the lower, by how much he finds this evil spirit raising him up. He is to hearken to that which presents the cross to it, and so to come down, and subject himself in serving and ministering to those who are little in his eyes. Instead of reigning over them, let him lie beneath them: let him watch and know the life even in the meanest, and serve it; for that is his place. That which would rule is to serve; that which would be great is to be little; and the little one is to become a nation. That which is low is to rise; and thou art not fit to rise with it, further than thou canst serve it, both in thyself and others. Therefore if ever thou beest aspiring, if ever thou have a mind to rule, if ever thou think thyself fit to teach, because of what thou hast received, sink down, lie low, take up the cross to that proud spirit, make it bend and serve, let the life in every one rise over it, and trample upon it; and afterwards that in thee may arise which is fit to teach, yea, and to rule in the Lord: and so long as that hath the dominion, thou mayst be serviceable to the Lord, and to his truth and people; but if ever the other get up again, thou must presently come down again, or the wrong spirit will get dominion over thee, which with force and cruelty will rule over the life both in thyself and others. Thus, if a man be faithful to Christ, this evil, aspiring spirit, at its first appearance, may be dealt with, and kept down; but if it be cherished, given way to, and once let up, it will be hard bringing of it down afterwards. Therefore the disciples,

or the church of Christ, are to watch over every such spirit, to beat it down, to testify against it, to turn from it, to lay it flat, to put it in its proper place; that is beneath all, to minister to all, and so not to suffer it to rise; see ver. 26. "Let him be your minister." This is his place, this is his work, by the authority of Christ. He that would be great, he that would rule, let him minister. Own him there; if he will lie low there, if he will be faithful there, ye may have unity with him. But in that his aspiring temper, in his ruling, in his teaching by what he hath gained, or what hath been given to him formerly (if out of the present life) he is to be denied and turned from.

If this rule of Christ's had been kept to, antichrist's power could never have got up: nor the poor innocent lambs so often have been worried by the wolves. Ah, poor hearts! how simply do they come thither, where they once tasted refreshment, to find wholesome advice, not suspecting what is got up there since, but give the dominion to a wrong thing, and so take directions from a wrong spirit, and betray their own simplicity.

Christ urgeth this upon his disciples from his own pattern, "even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but, &c." ver. 28. If any had right to be great, surely Christ; if any had right to exercise authority, surely Christ; if any was to be advanced because of any gift received, or because of any presence of the Spirit with him, surely Christ: yet Christ took not upon him this kind of greatness, nor did exercise this kind of authority; but he was a servant; he made use of the gift of the Spirit, of the power of life wherewith the Father filled him, to minister and serve with. He did never lord it over the consciences of any of his disciples; but did bear with them, and pity them in their infirmities. ("What! can ye not watch with me one hour? The Spirit" said he "is willing, but the flesh is weak.") He did not hold forth to them whatever he knew to be truth, requiring them to believe it; but was content with them in their state, and waited till their capacities were enlarged, being still satisfied with the honesty and integrity of their hearts in

their present state of weakness. Nor did he strive to reign over the world, or call for fire from heaven, when they would not receive him, or express indignation when they desired him to depart out of their coasts, or pray for twelve legions of angels when they came to betray him, and most unrighteously sought his life; but the life he had received of his Father he gave up as a ransom for his disciples, yea, and for his enemies. Mark: he did not make use of what was given to him, to raise himself up above others, to make his word to stand for a law, and be received; but he waited till that was opened in his disciples, and in the people, which was able to receive his testimony; and he made use of his power of life, and the fulness of the Spirit, to enable him the more abundantly to serve, and to wait in patience for the fulfilling of the will of the Father. And though Israel was not gathered by him, yet was he meek, and patient, and at rest in the will of him that sent him; and instead of reigning over all, could serve all, and give that life (whose due it was to reign) "a ransom for many." ver. 28.

"His kingdom was not of this world," nor did he seek any greatness or authority according to this world, neither over the Jews, nor over the Gentiles, nor over his own disciples; but he served all, he sought the good of all: the life in him, which was to reign over all, yet here served all, suffered for all, and from all, and that was his way to his crown; who having finished his course, fulfilled his service, perfected his sufferings, is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high, where now he reigns over all, and is made a king by God in righteousness. And this is the pattern which all his disciples are to walk by. The more life they receive, the more they are to minister, the more they are to serve. They must not lift up themselves by their gifts; they must not hereupon lord it over others, or hold forth their knowledge or doctrines, and think to make others bow thereto; but wait in their service, till the Lord make way into men's hearts, and plant his truth there; and upon him also must they wait for the watering and growth of it.

Quest. *But is there to be no greatness, no authority among the*

disciples of Jesus, or in the church of Christ? Is every one to do what he will, to be subject to his own fancies and imaginations, to the inventions of his own corrupt heart? What a confused building will this be! Surely this will not long remain a Sion, but soon become a Babylon, even a heap of disorder and confusion.

Ans. There is to be no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority; yet there is both a greatness and authority suitable to the state of disciples; suitable to that kind of kingdom whereof they are. There are laws, there are governments, there are governors, there is ruling, and there is subjection: but all in the Spirit; all suitable to that which is to be governed; but no government of, or according to, the flesh. As Christ's kingdom is not of this world, so the government of his church and people is not according to this world; but as that which gathers in his Spirit, and that which is gathered, is spiritual; so that which is governed is the spirits of his people, and they are to be governed by his Spirit, and spiritually, and not after a fleshly manner.

Thus Christ himself, though he ministered to his disciples, yet he also was their Lord and Master, and in the Spirit and life of the Father ruled over them. And thus the apostles and other ministers of Christ had likewise, in the Spirit, the care of the churches, and authority in the Lord, by his Spirit, to govern the spirits of his people: not to govern after a fleshly manner, by their own wills: not to prescribe to them in a lordly way, either what they should believe or practise; but, in the light and in the power of the Spirit, to make their way into every one's conscience in the sight of God, ministering to every one in the Spirit according to their capacity and growth, and waiting patiently for God to convey the food and nourishment, and to build their spirits up in the faith thereby.

"The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets." Here is the government, here is the law of rule and subjection in the life. Every one feeling a measure of the Spirit in himself, is thereby taught to own and be subject to a greater measure of the same Spirit in another. He that hath no measure of the spirit of God, he is not of God, he is none

of Christ's: and he that hath received a measure of the Spirit, in the same Spirit feeleth another's measure, and owneth it in its place and service, and knoweth its moving, and cannot quench it, but giveth way to it with joy and delight. When the Spirit moves in any one to speak, the same Spirit moves in the other to be subject and give way: and so every one keeping to his own measure in the Spirit, here can be no disorder, but true subjection of every spirit; and where this is wanting, it cannot be supplied by any outward rule or order, set up in the church by common consent: for that is fleshly, and lets in the flesh, and destroys the true order, rule, and subjection.

The apostles and ministers of Christ come from Christ with a message of life and salvation, with a testimony concerning the good-will of God, and his love to mankind; pointing out the way from death to life, from bondage to liberty, from wrath and destruction to peace and salvation. What they have seen, what they have felt, what they have tasted, what they have handled, what they have found redeem and deliver them, that they declare abroad to others, as they are moved, as they are sent, as they are guided and assisted.

Now that which they preach to is men's consciences in the sight of God. They open the truth which they know; they give their testimony in the moving, leading, and power of the Spirit, and leave it to the same Spirit to demonstrate it to men's consciences as it pleaseth. They are nothing, they can do nothing, they cannot convert any man to God; but the power that speaketh by them, the same power worketh in other men's consciences at its pleasure. And here is the beginning of the government of Christ in the heart; when his truth carries conviction with it to the conscience, and the conscience is drawn to yield itself up to him, then he lays his yoke upon it, and takes upon him the guiding of it; he cherisheth it, he cleanseth it, he comforteth it, he ordereth it at his pleasure; and he alone preserveth it pure, chaste, gentle, meek, and pliable to the impressions of his Spirit. And as the conscience is kept single and tender to

Christ, so his government increases therein; but as it becomes hard, or subject to men's wills, so another spirit gets dominion over it.

Therefore the great work of the minister of Christ is to keep the conscience open to Christ, and to preserve men from receiving any truths of Christ as from them further than the Spirit opens; or to imitate any of their practices further than the Spirit leads, guides, and persuades them. For persons are exceeding prone to receive things as truths from those whom they have a high opinion of, and to imitate their practices, and so hurt their own growth, and endanger their souls. For if I receive a truth before the Lord by his Spirit make it manifest to me, I lose my guide, and follow but the counsel of the flesh, which is exceeding greedy of receiving truths, and running into religious practices, without the Spirit. Therefore the main thing in religion is to keep the conscience pure to the Lord, to know the guide, to follow the guide, to receive from him the light whereby I am to walk; and not to take things for truths because others see them to be truths; but to wait till the Spirit make them manifest to me; nor to run into worships, duties, performances, or practices, because others are led thither; but to wait till the Spirit lead me thither. "He that makes haste to be rich" (even in religion, running into knowledge, and into worships and performances, before he feel a true and clear guidance) "shall not be innocent:" nor the Lord will not hold him guiltless, when he comes to visit for spiritual adultery and idolatry. The apostles were exceeding tender in this point:. for though they certainly and infallibly knew what was to be believed; yet they were not lords over men's faith, but waited till he who is lord of the faith, would open the way into men's consciences. They did not take upon them to be able to turn the key, to let in truth and conviction into men's spirits (as men in these days have been too apt to undertake); but directed them to him who had the key, there to wait for the conviction and illumination of their minds, and so to receive in, as they found him give forth to them.

"Let every man," saith the apostle, "be fully persuaded in his own mind;" take heed of receiving things too soon, take heed of running into practices too soon, take heed of doing what ye see others do, but wait for your own particular guidance, and for a full persuasion from God, what is his will concerning you. Though I know this to be a truth, yet do not ye receive it, till God make it manifest to you; receive truth from his hand, stay till he give it you. Indeed the main matter in religion is to keep out the wrong part, the forward part; the bastardly birth from running into duties, catching of openings, and laying hold of promises; and to feel the heir born of the immortal seed, to whom all belongs; and that the other birth never afterwards get up above him, but be subdued and brought into subjection.

Again, saith the apostle, take heed of doing any thing "doubtingly;" be not forward, be not hasty; wait for the leading, wait for the manifestation of the Spirit. Be sure thou receive what thou receivest in faith, and practise what thou practisest in faith; for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin," being an error from the principle of life, which is to guide; and thereby thou losest ground, and dishonorest Christ, and comest under condemnation.

And so the apostle warns believers, to take heed of drawing one another on too fast, or of judging one another in such things as some of them might have light in, others not. He that eateth, not to judge him that did not eat; and he that did not eat, not to judge him that did eat. Yea, in matters of worship, he that observed a day, and kept a sabbath, not to judge him that observed not a day, or kept not a sabbath; for the Jews, which were truly converted, were yet hard to be drawn off from the observation of their sabbath, and could hardly bear with the believing Gentiles, who were never taught to keep their sabbath with them, but were taught to esteem every day, and sanctify it to the Lord. Rom. xiv. 5. And those who esteemed every day, and dedicated it to the Lord (ceasing from sin, and resting to him: for under the gospel we are not to set up a

new type, but to enter by faith into the true rest, which is the substance of what the other signified) could hardly bear with them who observed a day. Even in the apostles' days, Christians were too apt to strive after a wrong unity and uniformity in outward practices and observations, and to judge one another unrighteously in these things. And mark; it is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace and unity, but the judging of one another because of different practices. He that keeps not a day, may unite in the same Spirit, in the same life, in the same love with him that keeps a day; and he who keeps a day, may unite in heart and soul with the same Spirit and life in him who keeps not a day; but he that judgeth the other because of either of these, errs from the Spirit, from the love, from the life, and so breaks the bond of unity. And he that draws another to any practice, before the life in his own particular lead him; doth as much as in him lies, destroy the soul of that person. ver. 15. This was the apostle's rule, for every one to perform singly to the Lord what he did, and not for one to meddle with the light or conscience of another (undervaluing his brother, or judging him because his light and practices differed from his, chap. xiv. 10.) but every one to keep close to their own measure of light, even to that proportion of faith and knowledge, which God of his mercy hath bestowed on them. And here is the true unity in the Spirit, in the inward life, and not in an outward uniformity. That was not necessary in the apostles' days, nor is it necessary now; and that eye which so dotes upon it, overlooks the one thing which is necessary. Men keeping close to God, the Lord will lead them on fast enough, and give them light fast enough; for he taketh care of such, and knoweth what light, and what practices are most proper for them; but for men to walk on faster than the Lord holds forth his light to them, this overturns them, raising up a wrong thing in them, and the true birth hereby comes to suffer, to shrink, and be driven back. And oh! how sweet and pleasant is it to the truly spiritual eye, to see several sorts of believers, several forms of

Christians in the school of Christ, every one learning their own lesson, performing their own peculiar service, and knowing, owning, and loving one another in their several places, and different performances to their Master, to whom they are to give an account, and not to quarrel with one another about their different practices! Rom. xiv. 4. For this is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but because I feel the same Spirit and life in him, and in that he walks in his rank, in his own order, in his proper way and place of subjection to that. And this is far more pleasing to me, than if he walked just in that rank wherein I walk: nay, so far as I am spiritual I cannot so much as desire that he should do so, until he be particularly led thereto, by the same Spirit which led me. And he that knows what it is to receive any truths from the Spirit, and to be led into practices by the Spirit, and how prone the fleshly part is to make haste, and how dangerous that haste is, will not be forward to press his knowledge or practices upon others, but rather wait patiently till the Lord fit them for the receiving thereof, for fear lest they should receive and practise too soon, even in that part which cannot serve the Lord. And this I can truly say concerning myself, I never found my spirit forward to draw any, either to any thing I believed to be true, or to any practice or way of worship I observed or walked in; but desired that the power and leadings of life might go before them, and was afraid lest men should receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's. Yea, and this I very well remember, that when I walked in the way of Independency (as it hath been commonly called) I had more unity with, and more love towards, such as were single-hearted in other ways and practices of worship (whose spirits I had some feeling of in the true simplicity, and in the life) than with divers of such who were very knowing and zealous in that way of Independency, in whom a wrong thing in the mean time had got up, which had caused them to swerve from the life, and from the simplicity.

So that the true church government being in the Spirit, and over the conscience as in the sight of God, the great care must be to keep it within its bounds, that nothing else govern but the Spirit, and that the government be extended only unto that which is to be governed.

First, Care must be had that nothing govern in the church of Christ, but the spirit of Christ: that nothing else teach; nothing else exhort; nothing else admonish and reprove; nothing else cut off and cast out. Every minister in the church is to watch over his own spirit, that it intrude not into the work of God, that it take not upon it to be the teacher, the exhorter, the reprover, &c. And every member is to wait in the measure of the Spirit which he hath received, to feel the goings-forth of the Spirit in him who teacheth and governeth; and so to subject not to man, but to the Lord; to receive from the Lord, to obey the Lord. Not to know any minister according to the flesh; but to receive and submit to what comes from the Spirit, in the Spirit. Not to know Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, but the Spirit ministering in them. Paul may err, Apollos may err, Peter may err (and did err, when he compelled the Gentiles to live as the Jews, Gal. ii. 14. for which Paul withstood him to the face. ver. 11.), and Barnabas also did err. ver. 18. But the Spirit cannot err; and he that keeps to the measure of the Spirit in himself, cannot let in any of their errors, if they should err, but is preserved. For the least measure of the Spirit is true, and gives true judgment; but he that receiveth ever so great a measure of the Spirit, yet if he keep not low therein, but lifteth up himself because thereof above his brethren, may easily err himself, and draw aside others into his error.

Secondly, Care must be had that the conscience be kept tender, that nothing be received, but according to the light in the conscience. The conscience is the seat of faith; and if it be not kept close to the light which God lighteth there, faith is soon made shipwreck of. Christianity is begun in the Spirit, which keepeth out the fleshly part, with all its fleshly wisdom and reasonings about spiritual things; and

as the beginning is in the anointing, so must the progress be. As the Spirit begins in the conscience, by convincing that, by persuading that, by setting up his light there, and leading the soul by that light; so that light must still be eyed, and according to its growth and manifestation in the conscience, so must the soul stand still, or go on.

The great error of the ages of the apostasy hath been, to set up an outward order and uniformity, and to make men's consciences bend thereto, either by arguments of wisdom, or by force; but the property of the true church government is, to leave the conscience to its full liberty in the Lord, to preserve it single and entire for the Lord to exercise, and to seek unity in the light and in the Spirit, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of different practices. Yea, and he that hath faith, and can see beyond another, yet can have it to himself, and not disturb his brother with it, but can descend and walk with him according to his measure; and if his brother have any heavy burthen upon him, he can lend him his shoulder, and bear part of his burthen with him. Oh! how sweet and lovely is it to see brethren dwell together in unity, to see the true image of God raised in persons, and they knowing and loving one another in that image, and bearing with one another through love, and helping one another under their temptations and distresses of spirit, which every one must expect to meet with.

If thou art a Christian indeed and in truth, preserve thy conscience pure and tender towards God; do not defile it with such religious practices, duties, ordinances, &c., as thou dost not feel the Spirit leading thee into; for all such are idols, and exceedingly pollute thee. And be tender also of thy brother's conscience, and be not an instrument to draw him into any thing which the Lord leads him not into; but rejoice if thou find him in simplicity of heart startling at any thing; for if he abide here faithful, his guide will in due season appear to him, and clear up his way before him; but if he be too hasty, he may follow a wrong guide, and

that guide will never lead him aright towards the kingdom, but entangle him further and further from it.

Oh! how many have run a whoring from the Lord! How many have first lost the guidance of his Spirit, and then drowned their life in religious performances! How many have drunk of the cup of fornication from the life, at the hands of the fleshly wisdom! How many have filled their spirit with New-Testament idols and images! How many have even hardened their hearts and consciences, by following the doctrines of men, their imaginary meaning of scriptures, and the imaginations and dreams of their own hearts! Is it not time for men at length to turn back towards the Lord, to wait for the visitation and light of his Spirit; from whom they have gone a whoring, and whom in all things they have grieved? And if ever any feel and enjoy the guidance of God's Spirit, their conscience must be kept tender to it, and ready to hear and follow his voice, who speaks in Spirit to that which is born of him, which infallibly knows his voice, and (being kept clear) cannot doubt concerning it. "My sheep hear my voice," saith Christ: they know it, and the voice of the strange spirit they know not so as to follow it, but turn from it, both in themselves and others. But that which is not the sheep, but hath only got the sheep's clothing, cries out, How shall we know the voice of the Spirit? We may be deceived. Nay, that which is born of God, that which is the elect of God, cannot be deceived. Wait therefore for the birth of the Spirit, to which the Spirit is given for a guide, who infallibly guides it out of deceit. All deceivers are out of this birth, out of this Spirit; perhaps in some birth or other framed from the letter, and living in the imitation of some practices and ordinances from the letter (under which cover they lie in wait to deceive), but strangers to the life and power, and to that wisdom which begets and bears to God. Thus the Jews erred, and deceived their proselytes before the coming of Christ: thus the Christians (in name) have generally erred all along the apostasy; and, indeed, for the generality, have not been true Christians, but only a persecuted

remnant amongst them; whose life hath been nourished and preserved, not by doctrines and observations which they have been taught by the precepts of men, nor by the knowledge which they themselves have gathered, but by a little bread daily handed to them from the Father of mercies out of the wilderness; that was the thing which nourished their souls up to God, though many of them knew not distinctly what it was that nourished them, nor how they came by it.

Object. *But is not uniformity lovely; and doth not the apostle exhort Christians to be of one mind; and were it not a sweet thing if we were all of one heart and one way?*

Ans. Yea, uniformity is very lovely; and to be desired and waited for, as the Spirit of the Lord, which is one, leads and draws into one. But for the fleshly part (the wise reasoning part in man) by fleshly ways and means to strive to bring about fleshly uniformity, which ensnares and overbears the tender conscience; this is not lovely, nor spiritual, nor Christian. And the apostle, who exhorts Christians to one mind, yet doth not bid them force one another into one mind, but walk together sweetly so far as they had attained; and wherein they were otherwise minded, God in his due time would reveal more to them. Philip. iii. 15, 16. He that hath, to him shall be given. And the intent and work of the ministry (with the several ministrations of it) is to bring into the unity, Ephes. iv. 13. as persons are able to follow: and not to force all men into one practice or way; that is the way to destroy the faith, and the true unity, and at best can introduce but a fleshly appearance of unity, in such a form of worship and godliness as eats out the power. And for being of one heart and one way, blessed be the Lord, this is in measure known and witnessed. The way is one; Christ, the truth of God; and he that is in the faith, and in the obedience to that light which shines from his Spirit into the heart of every believer, hath a taste of the one heart, and of the one way; and knoweth that no variety of practices, which is of God, can make a breach of the true unity. This is the one way, for every one to be sub-

ject to that light of Christ's Spirit which he hath received from Christ; and every one keeping here, there is also one part kept in the midst of all the variety, and diversity of practices. And the unity being thus kept, all will come into one outwardly also at length, as the light grows in every one, and as every one grows into the light; but this must be patiently waited for from the hand of God (who hath the right way of effecting it, and who alone can do it); and not harshly and cruelly attempted by the rough hand of man.

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

Concerning the State of Things relating to what hath been, now is, and shortly is to come to pass; warning all People to look about them, and to wait on the LORD for the unerring Light of his Spirit, that they may know the Times and Seasons, and the Work which GOD is now about in the World, which is Great and Wonderful; and so may not be found Fighters against GOD, his Truths, and the Witnesses of this Age and Generation; more particularly Lamenting over and Exhorting ENGLAND. With a faithful Testimony concerning the QUAKERS.

1. THAT the spouse of Christ, the true church which God built in the apostles' days by his Spirit, the church against which the gates of hell could not prevail; the church which was the temple of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; the woman which was clothed with the sun, who had the moon under her feet, and was crowned with a crown of twelve stars, &c.—this church, at the close of the fight between Michael with his angels, and the dragon with his angels, fled into the wilderness, into the place prepared of God for her, Rev. xii. 6. having two wings of a great eagle given

her, that she might fly thither to her place; where she was to abide, and be hid from the face of the serpent, and to be fed with the living nourishment from the hand of the Father all the time of antichrist's reign, which is said to be a time, times, and half a time, ver. 14. or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, as ver. 6. or forty-two months, as chap. xi. 2. And she was accordingly gone out of sight, insomuch as the serpent could find her no more, but "went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which kept the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. xi. 17.

2. That the true church cannot come out of the wilderness, till the time of her abode there (the set time appointed by God) be ended, nor then either, but by the out-stretched arm of the Lord. Ps. cii. 13. She may mourn over her desolate wilderness-state, but she cannot fly out of it, without the help of the wings of the same eagle, which were given her to fly into it. The Lord must pity the dust of Sion, and, by his everlasting strength and compassion, raise up the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, or it can be restored no more. ver. 16. Rev. xxi. 3.

3. That the state of the people of God, all this time of the true church's absence, hath been a state of captivity. The seed hath been in bondage in Egypt, the dark land, in Babylon, the land of confusion (for such all the church buildings, order, and government have been in comparison with the true order and government of the church by the Spirit, which was known and enjoyed by the people of God, before this her flight); where they have been mourning under the chains of darkness, and lamenting over their mother; for Sion hath been laid waste, and Jerusalem, the holy city, hath been trodden under foot by the Gentiles; to whom the outward court was given, when God took down his building, and secured his temple, altar, and the worshippers therein. Rev. xi. 2. And in this state God finds his people, when he comes to overthrow her (to bring death and mourning and famine and fire upon her. Rev. xviii. 8.), and to redeem them; for then the voice goes forth from the spirit of

the Lord, to the spirits of his people, "Come out of her my people; that ye be not partakers of her sins." &c. ver. 4. Why, were the people of God in her till now? Yea, till the very hour of her judgment, and are many of them in great danger of staying there, even till they feel her plagues. They that sit down in any church building, taking it for Sion, before God's season of building his Sion, sit down but in Babylon, it is no other; though they who have drunk of the false woman's cup (new-mixed for them, and so are enchanted afresh into some new, fine-painted bed of her fornication) cannot believe it to be so.

4. That when God redeems his people out of Babylon, he brings them not immediately unto Sion (not immediately into a built city), but into the wilderness where the church lies unbuilt, where they are prepared and fitted for the holy land, and circumcised in spirit before their entrance. There is a long travel from Babylon to Sion; wherein the hasty spirit, the rough spirit, the exalted spirit, the murmuring spirit; the self-will, self-worship, self-wisdom, knowledge, and righteousness (all which are of great price in Babylon) are cut down; and the spirit broken, emptied, made poor, deeply humbled, and so prepared for God's holy hill. When a Babylonish building or way of worship is discovered, man would fain have another ready, to put in the place of it so soon as it is pulled down. Thus man's wisdom would order it, but the Lord will not have it so; but there must be a season of desolation, of stripping, of nakedness, of being unclothed of all the purple and scarlet dye of Babylon. Rev. xvii. 4. A pulling off the ornaments of all the knowledge, worship, ordinances, duties, experiences, &c., which are held and practised out of the pure life. And in this state of misery and sore distress, the Lord lays the foundation of the new heavens, and of the new earth, in the spirits of his people; which, when it is finished, then at length he saith to Sion, "Thou art my people." Isa. li. 16.

Observe therefore the error of the reformations since the apostasy. They have been still building too fast, and not waiting on God to be hewn and squared, and fitted for his

building. The reformed churches have still been built of stones before they were made ready for the building. They have not waited their time of preparation in the wilderness, nor have they waited for God's building them up into a temple, nor for the time and season wherein it is God's pleasure to build. So that though they did well in separating from that which was corrupt and manifestly evil; yet they did not well in making haste into another way of their own forming, but should have waited for God's manifestation of the good, and for his leading of them by his Spirit into it. And by this means it has come to pass, that though there hath been a pure thing often stirring towards reformation; yet by an over forward hastening to build, the good hath been quenched, and the evil hath again (under a new cover or form of worship) overgrown it, and then hath been ready to revile and persecute the good in others: but this the eye which is overtaken with the appearing beauty of its building (having concluded it to be according to the will of God revealed in the Scriptures) cannot discern.

5. That when Sion is rebuilt, when the church its heaven is again stretched forth (wherein she was seated before she fled into the wilderness, Rev. xii. 1.), those that are God's faithful witnesses (into whom the Spirit of life hath entered, and whom he hath caused to stand upon their feet) shall ascend up to heaven in a cloud, which their very enemies shall behold. Rev. xi. 12. And this was done in the time of a great earthquake, wherein the tenth part of the city fell. ver. 13. The shaking at this time is very great in this nation; let them mark what will be the issue, and observe whether (notwithstanding all the seeming contrarieties) the Lord God doth not so order it, as to bring a considerable part of Babylon down, and of the powers that uphold her.

The people of God, all this time of antichrist's reign, have been a suffering people. The tender-hearted everywhere (whose souls could only bow to the Lord, who could not receive doctrines from men, or fall into worships and practices at the will of man) have lain open to church censures, as they call them, and to the magistrates' indignation, un-

der the names of heretics, blasphemers, seducers, and disturbers of the peace, both of church and state: and indeed, so far as any have tasted of the true light and power of Christ, and have been called forth by him to be his witnesses, they could not but be disturber of the carnal peace and security of the antichristian congregations against whom they witnessed. When the true church fled into the wilderness, the serpent cast a flood after her: she was reproached and blasphemed for a harlot, a strumpet, one that was not the Lamb's wife, as she pretended. Rev. xii. 15. For the dragon which persecuted her (having now gained her ground) had set up another woman for the true church, and had decked her richly, Rev. xvii. 4. insomuch as she was admired for her beauty by all the kings and inhabiters of the earth, ver. 2. but she which was indeed the true woman was trampled upon and despised, even by all the outward worshippers in the outward court all over the world. Rev. xi. 2. And if those of the synagogue of Satan could contend to be the true Jews, and the true church, even while the true church was standing, Rev. iii. 9. no marvel though they carry it clear in their several forms and disguises in the time of her flight and absence, especially they appearing both in the place where she once was, and in her very dress: and here is the eye of God's Spirit, and of the wisdom he gives to his babes, tried, even to discern and fly from her there. Let her paint ever so often, change her dresses in every hour of reformation, come nearer and nearer into the likeness of the true church; yet that which is born of the truth espieth her; and the young man whose ear is kept open to the voice of wisdom, which uttereth itself in the immortal seed, escapeth her bed, and is not defiled with the great whore, nor with any of her women or daughters, who are born of her after her spirit, though they deny her, and seem much to differ from her according to the flesh. Rev. xiv. 4. Enter into the mystery of life (from out of the reach of the spirit of witchcraft), and read me here, that in the true eternal light of all the living, thou mayest perceive the mystery of deceit, and escape as a bird from the snare, and

live. Now the true church being thus fled, what becomes of her seed? They must needs be scattered; they can no more be found in a body as before; there is now but a remnant left which "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ," and these the dragon applies himself still to manage the war against. Rev. xii. 17. And the beast (to whom the dragon gave his power, Rev. xiii. 2. and upon whom the false church was found sitting even to the very last, Rev. xvii. 3.) did not only make war with the saints, but also overcame them: and this power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations. ver. 7. of chap. xiii. So that the holy city was to be kept down and trampled under foot by the false worshippers, under one form or appearance of church worship or other, all the time of the beast's reign. Rev. xi. 2. And as the beast did kill them, so the woman that sat upon the beast drank their blood. Rev. xvii. 6. For mark; the dragon, the first beast, the second beast with the false church, are all in unity together, and drive on their war and design, under disguises and appearances of truths and church worship and discipline, against the Lamb and his followers; against every appearance of Christ in his truth and people. And every where, where he can get into any form without the power, there he manageth his war by the form against the power. Thus in Popery, by crying up holy church, he knocks down all the springings-up of truth there; so in Episcopacy, by crying up that form, how did he knock down the buildings-up of the true life and power there also! And if he be driven out there, then he stands ready to enter into the next form, either of Presbytery or Independency, that he may not want the advantage of a cover to keep his war on foot still against the saints and the truths of Christ: and here lies his strength; and the liker his form is to that which once was true, the better it serves to cover him; and he has better advantage of fighting under it against Christ, his truths and people, than under another which is not so like. But antichrist's reign (who hath taken the name upon him without the nature, and so persecuted the true nature,

being covered with the name) is to have an end; yea, (blessed be the Lord) it is in part ended, and the Lamb's day is already begun, the out-stretched arm of the Lord's everlasting power is revealed, and revealing more and more: yea, Babylon is already discovered, her waters are dried up, her nakedness under all her covering is seen, her very life and spirit are struck at, her kingdom totters daily; the stakes also of Sion's tabernacle are strengthening daily, and the Lord is stretching out her curtains, and enlarging her territories: and the wrath issues out more and more from the throne, and dreadful woes and plagues are prepared for them, who are either upholding any old likenesses of what once was true, or setting up any new ones in this day of God's power, wherein he is redeeming and bringing forth the life itself.

Is it not plain that the beast (or antichrist who sat in the temple of God, ruling there as a beast by outward force, without the inward life and power. 2 Thes. ii. 4.) had power given him to continue his war against the saints, till the very expiration of the forty-two months? Rev. xiii. 5. And was not this power given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations? ver. 7. Did not the false church, or false woman, till the very end of this time (in one appearance or other, under some form of worship or other; sometimes in a grosser and more loathsome, sometimes in a finer and more taking dress), still go for the true church, being upheld by the kings and inhabitants of the earth, who all drank of her cup of fornication? Rev. xvii. 2. 4. Was not the holy city (or true church) trodden under foot all this while in every kindred, nation, &c., by the heathenish spirit of the antichristian Christians therein, who made a great show of zeal and worship in the outward court? Rev. xi. 2. For while the holy city is to remain unbuilt, he that will worship in it, must sink into its ruins, and lie desolate with it; but he that will be building before God's time, rejects the corner stone, which lies hid in the ruins of this city, and so builds up a Babylon, to which though he gives the name of Sion, yet it is not so in truth; but Sion lies underneath,

in the dust, trampled upon, and set at nought, by him and his building. Now, shall the forty-two months never have an end? And shall the holy city never rise again from under the feet of the antichristian professors and worshippers of the outward court? Shall the walls of Sion never be built more? Or is it to be expected, when the Lord begins to build her up, and bring her forth, that ever any of the false churches should own her? Oh, fear therefore before the Lord! every one entering into that in his own heart, which (being hearkened unto) teacheth the fear, and breaketh the pride, loftiness, and conceitedness of the high-imagining mind, which first builds up with apprehensions about church, religion, and worship, without the Spirit, and then is offended with that which cannot bow to those images. But be it known unto you, O nations and powers of the earth! that the Lord hath raised up a people, whose knees can alone bow at the name of Jesus, and whose tongues can alone confess to him. And if Nebuchadnezzar's spirit should heat a furnace of affliction seven times hotter than it hath yet been heated all this day of the cruel sufferings of God's dear people, and threaten all with it that will not bow to the image or form of worship which he sets up; yet this we know assuredly, that the Lord hath begotten a seed which he can deliver, and which we do not doubt but he will deliver, let antichrist's sea and waves roar ever so loud against them. But, however, bow to any image they cannot; for they have tasted of the living truth itself, which hath made them free from such images and idols wherein they were before entangled; and the spirit of the Lord calleth aloud to them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set them free, and not receive any more the yoke of bondage upon their necks, but to draw under the sweet, gentle yoke of his Spirit.

O England, England! how sad is thy state! how great and mighty things hath the Lord done for thee! but thou still overlookest his hand, and art offended with the work of his Spirit, because it suits not with thy fleshly desires and interests. O England, England! what will become of

thee? The Lord hath kindled his fire, and thou addest fuel daily. The Lord is arisen to make inquisition for the sufferings and blood of his people; and thou, instead of repenting of what thou hast done, art greedy of more. Thou hast deeply drunk of the whore's cup of fornication, and that makes thee thus thirsty after the saints' blood. Thou criest out against those that put the martyrs to death, as the professing Jews did against those that put the prophets to death; and yet persecutest their spirit wherever it appears in further prosecution of the work of reformation at this day, even as the Jews did persecute the spirit of the prophets in Christ and his apostles. Oh, mourn to the Lord to open thine eyes, that thou mayest not thus stand any longer in his way! Let him bring forth his church, let him set up his truth, let him advance his people, and do not thou go about to limit the Spirit of the Holy One in them. There is none of these will harm thee, but bring blessings upon thee. Let thy governors keep within their bounds, and be a defence upon all people in their just rights and liberties, and see if from that day he do not bless thee. But if there be one thing in the Lord's heart concerning his people, and another thing in thine; if he resolve to bring them forth to his praise, and to give them their liberty in their obedience to his Spirit, and thou resolvest they shall come under thy yoke and bonds, how can ye agree? Your wrath by this means must needs be kindled against each other, and he that hath most strength will carry it. For as the day of your wrath is come, to see the people of God so increase, grow bold in his truth and power; so the day of his wrath is come, to see his people so reproached, hated, hunted, and persecuted, for his name's sake. Rev. xi. 18. And take heed, lest upon that spirit which in this generation still continues persecuting, the sufferings, persecutions, and blood of all the saints and martyrs (shed all the time of antichrist's reign) be not required. The blood of all the prophets, from Abel to Zacharias, was required of that great professing generation of the Jews, who spake such great words of Moses and the prophets, but persecuted Christ and his apostles. Mat. xxiii. 35.

And the blood of all the souls that lie under the altar crying "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?" They were bid to rest a little season, and then the blood of all that ever were slain since the apostles' days is to be required of that generation of professors, which are found, even to the very last, in the persecuting spirit. Rev. vi. 10, 11.

I do not write this to reproach any sort of professors; but in true love and bowels of compassion, that such among them as ever had any taste of God, and of his sweet, meek Spirit, but are now grown hard, and found smiting their fellow-servants, may (if it be possible) hear the Lord's voice, which yet tenderly calls after them, that they may not be cut in pieces, and receive their portion of wrath with Babylon. Mat. xxiv. 49, 50, 51. Rev. xviii. 4. As for me, I am poor and weak (a worm, and no man), one who hath been a mourner and wanderer in a strange land all my days; yea, I have been that fool, who though I have often been very near, yet still knew not the way to the city of my God. Eccles. x. 15. And at present I am very unworthy and unfit to be the instrument in the Lord's hand for the reclaiming of any man from his wanderings. Yet this I can, in truth and uprightness, say concerning the Lord's gracious dealings with me, that in the bowels of his mercy he hath visited me, and turned my face toward his Sion: and his life and Spirit (as he pleaseth to keep me fresh and open) I know both my way and my leader; and also that which is mine enemy, which continually endeavoreth to betray and devour me. And I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not. I know also what I have felt wrath and misery upon, and what the Lord hath so long and so severely smitten in me, he will not spare in others. Oh! that men could hear, and avoid my bed of torment, where I suffered a most dreadful and terrible hell for many years (bear with me, for I cannot call it less), though without either guilt upon my spirit, or fear of wrath, being justified before God in my own conscience (till afterwards, under long continuance of misery and thick darkness, some guilt was contracted), and having

a secret root of hope concerning good from God, if once I might appear in his presence to plead my cause there. Who can possibly believe the misery I endured (if it were related)! and yet it had not the least mixture of either of these in it for a long time. But after this, through the ignorance and thick darkness wherewith I had been long overwhelmed, not knowing what had been, and still was, present with me, the tempter by his subtlety got in, and led out my mind from what had visited and sought after me all my days, to wait and hope for some great appearance to set me to rights: and here my loss was very great, my soul being hereby removed far away from the present feeling of the spring of my life, and drawn to neglect the little dawnings of that light which shineth more and more to the perfect day; having concluded in myself that no less would suffice to heal me, than its breaking forth in its full strength, even at noon upon me. Thus I despised the day of small things, and was seduced into a gaping after, and waiting for that, which is never so to be received: but the little seed of light being received, and finding good and honest earth, groweth up therein even to perfection, and then knoweth and receiveth the light of the day in its full strength. And although there was such a savor of God left in me, that upon the first converse with this people called QUAKERS, I could own the voice of God in them, and set to my seal (as in the presence of God) that it was the true life and power of the Most High whereof they were born; yet I could not but despise it as a weak and low appearance thereof; yea, and started back from it, as being such a kind of dispensation of life and power as was to pass away; and the passing away whereof from me had made me so miserable. And now I am as one born out of due time, and come lagging behind; feeling myself altogether unworthy to be numbered amongst them, or to bear a testimony to that truth and power of life wherein they flourish, and by which they are redeemed and bought out of the earth with the price of the living, immortal blood of Jesus, by which (together with the word of his testimony) they cannot but

overcome all the powers of darkness (with all the powers of the earth, which stand in the darkness, and fight under the darkness), being taught thereby not to love their lives unto the death. But the scoffing, conceited professor will be ready to say, *What! are those the only people? Others besides them are as dear to God as they. There are many in forms equal to them, and many out of forms far beyond them.* Whereto I answer thus; Yea, there are so in the scale of man's judgment: but not so in the measure of the sanctuary. These are the only redeemed people that my soul knows of. There is a seed besides them, not yet gathered, but in Babylon, whom the Lord (in his due season) will gather into the same light, life, and power; but there is no other Saviour but that light eternal which hath given them life, and dwells in them; who is risen in them, come to them, and hath taken them into himself; in whom they are, even in him that is true, who is the Son of God, the true God, and the eternal life, 1 John v. 20. who hath poured forth his Spirit upon them, in which they minister and gather up to God those who have an ear to hear the voice of his Spirit. Beware, therefore, O ye nations and powers of the earth, what ye do against his people! for ye cannot prevail by any enchantment against these whom the Lord hath blessed; but the more ye strive to vilify and suppress them, the more the Lord will magnify and exalt them. And the life which God hath raised up in them must reign, do what ye can against it. Oh abase yourselves, and kiss the Son, O professors and powers of the earth! that ye be not cut off; for the Lord's hand is lifted up, and in his jealousy he will smite home for the sake of Sion; for his ear hath heard the cry of the poor and needy, whom no man regardeth. Isa. xxxii. 10, 11.

A

WARNING OF LOVE,

FROM THE

BOWELS OF LIFE,

TO THE

SEVERAL GENERATIONS OF PROFESSORS OF THIS AGE;

That they may awaken, and turn towards the LIFE, to be truly cleansed and saved by its powerful, living Virtue, before the Storm of Wrath break forth, and the overflowing Scourge overtake them, which will sweep away the strongest and most well-built Refuge of Lies; and sink those souls even into the Pit of Misery, which are there found when the Storm comes.

HELD FORTH
IN FOUR PROPOSITIONS, ASSERTIONS, OR CONSIDERATIONS,
CONCERNING MAN IN HIS LOST STATE, AND
HIS RECOVERY OUT OF IT.

PROPOSITION I.

That MAN is fallen from GOD.

THERE is an everlasting, infinite, pure fountain, and well-spring of life, from whence all creatures came; from whence their life, being, motion, virtue, and rest flow; in which they all have a place and standing according to their nature, estate, temperature, and course of operation in his eternal counsel, who made all, disposeth of all, ruleth in and over all eternally; whose everlasting kingdom and dominion

(which was before all, and will be after all) cannot be excluded by any power or dominion which ariseth after it; but only so far as itself hath pleased, it hath given way to that power of darkness, which is contrary to it; which how it sprang up, what it hath to do, and how it is to vanish, is not for man's comprehension to fathom.

In this spring of life, man had an especial place and standing. The Lord had created and placed him supreme, under himself, over the works of his hands; gave him his kingdom here on earth under him, gave him his image to rule in, even a sufficient measure of that eternal wisdom in which he formed him, to which he was to be subject himself, and by which he was to reign over and order all with delight, joy, and comfort in himself, to the praise and glory of him who formed all, and had given him dominion over all. Here was the sweet estate, the sweet peace, the sweet liberty, the sweet uniformity of all; all being kept and preserved in that life, virtue, wisdom, goodness, power, and love wherein they were made; the creatures naturally becoming subject to, serving and obeying man (man using them and ruling over them not in the tyranny, not in the lust, not in the vanity, not in the excess; but in the righteousness, in the love, in the meekness, in the moderation, in the divine wisdom, in the pure power and virtue of the life); man likewise naturally veiling to his Maker, walking in his light, living in his life, shining in his beauty, conquering and triumphing over all that might assault, in his strength, and continuing perfect and straight before him in purity and cleanness of the creature (not degenerated) towards his Creator and Preserver. Now what could man want, having the spring of life so near him? What could he desire, in the purity, in the life, which the Father of life could have withheld from him? Had he asked in the Spirit, could the Father have denied him? And had he stood still a while in the life, out of the lust, could he have forborne asking in the Spirit? Had he not so suddenly been tempted to the tree of knowledge, surely he had eaten of the tree of life, and had lived for ever.

But man being in honor, lodged not one night (HE FELL THE FIRST NIGHT, read me who can), *but became like the beasts that perish.* He lost the divine image, and then had at best but the natural; but that depending upon the divine, the beauty thereof was lost too. He lost the eternal wisdom, he lost the spring, he lost the godhead, he lost that which was to reign over the creatures, and then he became but as the creatures; nay, worse than the creatures. What he henceforth knows of God (as he stands in the degeneration) he knows naturally, like brute beasts (even by the natural exercise of his mind, with the faculties thereof, even as the beasts learn and know by their nature, after their kind); and in what he thus knows, he corrupts himself worse than the beasts. Let the Lord try him ever so much, ever so often; drop down of *the dew of heaven* upon him, send him *line upon line, precept upon precept, now a little and then a little*, yet he still remains brutish, both in his understanding, receiving, and in his making use of it all. Still he forgets the truth, and loses himself in the image; gets a notion, an imagination, a comprehension of somewhat into his natural part (which changes him not inwardly, but still he is the same in his root, ground, and nature), but the life, the eternal virtue, he is still estranged from, and so is brutish in all his knowledge and apprehensions of God and his truths; brutish in his worshipping of him, brutish in his belief and hopes, and his immortal soul perishes under all. Outward Israel was a true and full resemblance of him, who had many teachings, a pure law of worship and sacrificing, many prophets to reduce and restore them to the right path of holiness and obedience, but still they were erring in their hearts from the Lord, and his pure law of life; not knowing their owner, or their master's crib, so well as the ox or ass did theirs. Isa. i. 3.

PROPOSITION II.

That man, by all the imaginations that can enter into his heart, and by all the means he can use, or courses he can run, cannot return back to God again, or so much as desire it.

The fall of man from God is such, that it hath benumbed all his senses; yea, so bereft him of them, that he cannot feel his own estate. He is dead, spiritually dead; and can no more feel his death, his spiritual death, than a man naturally dead can his natural death. He is bewitched into a fool's paradise, where he hath a new life, a new virtue, a new wisdom, a new kingdom, a new dominion (which is indeed but death); with which he is so transported, that he forgetteth the old; and in this new spirit and estate cannot so much as desire after it. Men speak of the relics of the image which the first man had: Ah! poor deceived hearts! What relics of life are there in a dead man? What relics of purity in a man wholly degenerated and corrupted? Nay, nay; the spiritual image, the divine image, the eternal life, the pure power and virtue is wholly lost; and there is nothing left, but what is captivated and destroyed through the degenerating power. There is nothing at all of the eternal kingdom, of the spiritual image, of the divine life, to be found in fallen man, but a little seed; and that seed not so much as sown in the earth, as he stands in the degeneration; for the sowing of it is the beginning of the work anew. And now, who can read this riddle? *The kingdom is within every man, and yet not so much as sown in any man, till the springing up of the eternal virtue, according to the eternal pleasure: nay, the earth is not so much as prepared to receive the seed, until the Lord send his plough into the heart.* So that it is impossible for fallen man to attain to so much as one true breathing or desire after God again; this must arise from the grace, from the mercy, from a new begetting (by the free gift) towards life, towards the divine image again; which was slain in

man (and the impression of it on him wholly lost) ever since the foundation of the world in his heart, which God hath set there, ever since he chose it. And, indeed, fallen man, degenerated man (would the Spirit of the Lord let him alone, and not disquiet him) likes his own estate well enough. The world being written in his heart, his thoughts and desires are centred there, and of themselves reach no further. Might he but have the enjoyment of the creatures without, and the enjoyment of such a kind of earthly knowledge and wisdom within, as he now aspires after, he would sit down in Egypt and Babylon, resting fully satisfied with Egyptian knowledge and wisdom, and with the Babylonish treasures (might he have enough of them); and never think of Sion, and the pure, holy land of life any more.

But when the Eternal stirs in him, when the pure Light opens at any time, then he has some little glimmerings of his estate, then he has some sense of his fallen condition, and some desire to remedy it. What doth he then? Then he bestirs himself to get somewhat to cover him, then he gathers stones, and makes mortar to build up a wall and raise a tower, that he may not lie open to the deluge of wrath; for, by this stirring of the life, he hath some little taste and sight that he is not one with the life, but departed from it. The soul, being awakened by the opening of its own spring in it, begins to feel the want of its spring. It wants the true virtue, the true peace, the true joy, the true comfort and refreshment, the true rest, the true liberty, the true life, the true light; and for want of this, its estate is miserable; and in the stirring of the spring, it feels this misery; and in this feeling it groans, it mourns, it pants, it cries out, and the creatural, earthly spirit can have no rest because of it. What, therefore, doth the creature do to still this cry? Why, it joineth, as it were, with the soul; it useth all the means it can to attain that which the soul sees the want of: it inquireth after God, hearkeneth out after those that know him, studieth the law, observeth the statutes and ordinances, performeth the duties, believeth, prayeth, hopeth, waiteth; nay, what is it which the creature will not set

upon in this distress (especially if the convictions of the eternal light pursue and follow him close) to still the cry of the soul, and to attain the price of the eternal inheritance, which is set before the soul; which the soul can never be at rest or satisfied without some assurance of, and progress towards? But all this will not do. Man, in all his own obedience, as well as in his disobedience, is shut out. "There is a flaming sword, which turns every way, to keep the way of the tree of life;" insomuch as man can, by no means, come at the way to the true life, nor enter into the strait and narrow path that leads thereto, but as he is cut to the heart, his life let out, and he dies, and comes into unity with that which slays him, and keeps the way from him. So that man, in his running to God, is thrust by; as well as in his running from him: in his willing and desiring after him he is rejected, as well as in his willing against him. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Mark: there is a birth of bloods, a birth of the will of the flesh, a birth of the will of man, John i. 13. all these will, all these run (some of them very hard); but they are all thrust by, and disregarded by the Lord, both in their willing and in their running. There are *many* found *running the race, but one obtains the prize*, which one is he that is *born of God;* to whom, when God gives the prize, he will say to all the other births (notwithstanding all their willing and running, their believing, hoping, praying, &c.), "Depart from me, I know you not," ye are the fruit of a strange womb, not of my spouse, and so must not inherit my kingdom. And as all these will be cut short of the inheritance at last, so all that they do at present is loathsome to the Lord's soul. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind." Prov. xxi. 27. His sacrifice, his worshipping of God, his praying, his reading of Scriptures, his meditating thereon, and of God and his works; his believing, hoping, waiting, fearing of threatenings, and applying of promises, &c., all is abomination. The wicked man, he whose heart is not circumcised by the Lord's eternal spirit, whatsoever he can,

or doth, sacrifice to God, the Lord loathes, and it cannot profit his soul.

Object. *Yea, when he does them in hypocrisy, so they are.*

Ans. Nay, more than so. When he doeth them with an evil heart, they are much more abominable; *how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind.* But let him bring it with a good mind, with that which he calls the good heart, (for the circumcised heart, the heart of the true new birth, is only the good heart; not that heart which every false birth is apt to call good); let him bring it with that heart which he takes to be the upright heart; with an honest intention, so far as he knows; take his sacrifices at the very best, at the very purest he can attain to; yet then they are abomination.

And the reason hereof is plain and manifest. The fountain is unclean, the root in him is corrupt; and who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Make the tree good, and his fruit will be good; but while the tree is bad, the fruit cannot be good. Now can the holy God be pleased with that sacrifice which comes from the unclean spring? Can God own or approve that knowledge of himself, that faith, that love, that obedience, that integrity or uprightness, that industry or diligence, those prayers or breathings, which man pumps up out of the old cistern? Nay, all these must into the pit, with the common filthiness and pollutions of the earth; and when the Lord takes these aside from the several sorts of professors, what will be left in them? Oh, how many have builded up a wall, daubing it with untempered mortar, which will not stand in the day of trial, nor shelter them from the eternal flames! Oh, what yelling and roaring will there shortly be in such as by no means will be warned, but would be justifying of themselves in their false knowledge and practices, and reserving their fabrics of religion to the trial of the day! and the day will try them indeed; even to the bitter perplexity and anguish of their hearts, when they come to see that there is now no way of escape; but they must lie down in the bed of eternal sorrow, misery, and torment; and in utter separation from that

wherein they thought they had a large and unquestionable share.

PROPOSITION III.

That all professions of God and of Christ upon the earth; all knowledge and beliefs whatsoever, with all practices of duties and ordinances of worship, save only such as proceed from, and are held in, the pure life, are but as so many fig-leaves, or deceitful plasters, which may skin over the wound, but cannot truly heal it.

The wound of man is deep by the fall: he hath really lost God, he is shut out of his commonwealth; yea, in that estate, he is altogether without hope (for the hope springs from God's visitation of him with his light, and from the living promise).

That which recovers man, is the eternal virtue, the endless power, the life immortal, the Christ of God.

Now, whatever knowledge man gathers (whether from the book of the creatures, or from the Scriptures, or any other ways) or whatever man professes, or whatever man practises out of this, it is but a cover of his own, but a formed thing; but his own image of truth, of knowledge, of faith, of love, of obedience, of worship; it is not the living truth, the living knowledge, the living faith, the living love, the living obedience, the living worship: and so it is but mortal, but fleshly; and when it comes before the eternal flames, it will not abide them, but vanish. "All flesh is grass;" all the knowledge, the faith, the love, the worship, the obedience, the righteousness, &c., which man (who is ignorant of the leadings and power of the life) can come at, is but grass; yea, the flower of it, the seeming beauty and goodliness of it, the very choicest of it in any sort of professors, is but "as the flower of the field:" it may make a fair show there, but when the Lord cutteth it down with his sickle, and when his sun riseth upon it with its burning

heat, it will soon wither, and his fire will soon devour it, so that its very place shall be found no more. What will become of all the fruit that flesh hath borne, when God maketh bare, and cutteth down the root? What will become of all mortal knowledge of the Scriptures, mortal worship; the faith and obedience which hath its root, growth, and spreading in the mortal part, when the Lord heweth at it with his immortal axe? Do not deceive yourselves; there is nothing will stand but what is immortal, and that which is gathered into it, and so one with it. No knowledge, no faith, no love, no obedience, no worship, no hopes, but what spring from the seed, are gathered into the seed, and live in the seed. This will abide, when all that springs from man, and hath its place and residence in the mortal part (and not in the true treasury) will come to an end, and disappoint all who have their hopes of the inheritance there.

PROPOSITION IV.

That the living seed of eternal life, which God hath hid in man underneath his earth, hath in it the living virtue, which alone can heal man, and restore him to God.

THAT which heals of the death, is the tree of life, whose rind or bark, whose leaves, whose blossoms, whose fruit, whose boughs and branches, whose bulk or body, with the whole sap thereof, are all healing, and there is nothing else can heal. Let man catch all the knowledge that ever sprang from the life; if he could believe (I mean in the man's part) all that ever the life spake, if it were so that he could perform all that ever the life called for, yet this would not heal him at all: whereas the least virtue from the life, springing up into, and livingly retained in, the life's vessel, truly refreshes and heals. The seed in all its springings-up, and shootings-forth in the heart, lets out of its healing virtue. Let but in a reproof, a conviction, a judgment, a con-

demnation, which wounds that part which hath erred from the life, yet even in that there is a secret, hidden healing of somewhat else. The smitings of the righteous principle are as balm, and its reproofs an excellent oil. Thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. In all the tearings, smitings, and rendings of the earthly part (with which the seed also suffers) and the faith in which these are received, is the present substance of the healing from the eternal virtue hoped for.

Now, who will be wise? Let him become a fool in the flesh. Who will be strong? Let him become weak in the man's part. Who will be saved by the eternal power? Let him cease from the man in himself. Whoever would be able, in the life, to do all things, let him sink into that in himself which is not, that it may bring to nought all things in him that are; that so it alone may be: and he by it being brought to nothing, will easily become all in it. This is the true way of restoration, of redemption; first to be lost, to be overcome, to be drowned, to be made nothing by that *which is not;* that that may come to BE in him, and he be quickened, raised up, and perfected in that, and so become possessor of the fulness. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;" but he that daily loseth his strength, and his ability to know, or so much as to will or desire (even till at length he become nothing at all) in him is the corrupt at last destroyed, and the mortal swallowed up of the life. He, that feels the pure seed springing up, and by the growth of that is daily begotten, quickened, raised, justified, sanctified, circumcised, baptized, [is] fed in one part, and starved in another. When the work of begetting, quickening, raising, regenerating, justifying, sanctifying, circumcising, baptizing is finished in him, and he is thoroughly begotten into the life, quickened by the life, raised in the life, regenerated, justified, sanctified, circumcised, and baptized through the life, he shall have the kingdom, wear the crown, enter into the joy of his Lord, wielding the sceptre of righteousness with his Lord in his kingdom for

ever. Now this work is to be done in the heart, on this side the grave; for after death comes judgment for the things done in the body; and the tree is to be disposed of, according as it is found at its fall, either to the fire, or to grow and flourish in the land of life. Therefore be not slothful, but watch unto the movings of the living seed, that its work may be perfected; that it may arrive at its stature, and come to its full growth, and may finish its service and testimony, that so it may enter into its habitation, and receive you with it into its everlasting mansion, where every servant and constant sufferer with the seed shall be welcomed of its Father, and remain a partaker of their joy and fulness for ever.

ISAAC PENINGTON, THE YOUNGER.

Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? 1 Cor. i. 20.

THESE have always been the enemies and opposers of truth, and setters-up of false images thereof in all ages; the wise, the learned, the great disputants. To these truth has still been mean and contemptible, their eye hath still over-looked it, and their imaginations have still out-run it, finding out somewhat else in the stead thereof; for which they have been still able and vigorous to contend, and against the truth itself. And indeed how can the wise eye see that, how can the learned eye acknowledge that, which comes quite out of the way of its knowledge and learning, even in a path that it is not at all acquainted with? "Wisdom is justified of her children." Those that are wise to salvation those that are learned in the Spirit, those that can dispute in the power of the life and demonstration of the Spirit, these know her habitation, and her out-goings, and can own her in every age and in every dispensation and coming-forth: but the wise and learned of this world are

shut out of this wisdom, and in all their searches after truth cannot find her; and if at any time they do find and taste somewhat of her, yet they cannot keep her; but the wisdom and learning and strength of the earthly part in them soon betrays and makes a prey of the simplicity that is in Christ, and of his pure gospel; which cannot be comprehended, nor will take up a dwelling-place with this wisdom, but brings it to nothing, tramples upon it, and keeps it down for ever, where it abides.

Three sorts of enemies, of the wise, the learned, the great disputants, Truth hath always had. First, Of such as have denied the true form of knowledge and worship. Secondly, Of such as have owned the form, but withstood the power. Thirdly, Of such as have had a taste of the power, but afterwards erred from it; and so held that, which they had once a true taste of, in the unrighteous part, and likewise added to it by their own imaginations.

When Israel was in Egypt (that poor, illiterate company of brick-makers) in bondage under that wise people, the Egyptians, with all their wisdom, could not own their God, or their worship; but their God was an unknown being to all that wisdom, Exod. v. 2. and his worship and sacrifice the abomination of their eyes. Exod. viii. 26. And Jannes and Jambres, with other wise magicians, withstood the appearance of God; and Pharaoh and his people, with their wisdom, thought to have kept God's Israel from multiplying, Exod. i. 10. and to have held Israel still under their servitude, after the Lord was risen to stretch out his arm for their deliverance. Exod. v. 8, 9. And how did all the wise nations still watch to make a prey of God's Jerusalem! how did they count the towers! how often did they think to divide the spoil! Judg. v. 28. Isa. xxxiii. 18. how did Sennacherib and Rab-shakeh make her their own! and when the Lord did at any time give Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers, how did they think to keep her under for ever! The wise Assyrian, the Moabite, the Ammonite, the Edomite, the Philistine, the Amalekite, the wise Babylonian or Chaldean, thought to keep her under, as Pharaoh had

done, even till their wisdom and knowledge perverted them also, Isa. xlvii. 10. and the prince of Tyre, who was wiser than Daniel, Ezek. xxviii. 3. he also could insult over Jerusalem, and rejoice at her downfall and captivity. chap. xxvi. 2.

But to come closer; come to Israel itself. That people, by all the wisdom it could gather from the law, by all the experiences it had had of God's power, by all the faith that was wrought in them upon deliverances, yet had not eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hearts to perceive; but were a people that did always err in their hearts, and did not understand the way of truth and peace. The prophets among them were still fools; yea, the spiritual man mad. Hos. ix. 7. The priests were generally ignorant of the Lord (for though they had the ark of his presence, his tabernacle, his temple, altar, sacrifices, worship, &c., yet they did not know where he was, nor did inquire after him, but contented themselves with a form of knowledge and worship). And they that handled the law, knew not him who gave the law, and was the sole true interpreter of the law; but the pastors transgressed against him, and the prophets prophesied by another spirit. Jer. ii. 8. They were wise, and did abound in their own meanings, guessings, and gathered knowledge; but they knew not the truth, no, not of the letter according to the law, and according to that light which God sometimes caused to shine among them from his prophets. Hence it was that that people, with their rulers, their teachers, their priests, their prophets, were generally enemies to the prophets whom God raised up, hating, persecuting, imprisoning, stoning them, &c. The prophets of God (that spake his truth in his wisdom, in his life, in power, in the demonstration of his Spirit) they could not away with: these were fools with them; these were mad-men with them; 2 Kings ix. 11. Jer. xxix. 26. these were poor, illiterate herdsmen and ploughmen: they had learned men, that were brought up at the schools of the prophets, that could prophesy divine things, sweet things, that could open the law learnedly: these prophets and these priests the rul-

ers cherished, and the people loved. Jer. v. 31, and xxiii. 26, 27. Ezek. xiii. 3, &c.

Yea, among that people, such as had a taste of the truth, as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram might have (for surely it was not a small matter that could so lift them up to oppose Moses and Aaron in that manner, and to stand out the contest with them even in the Lord's presence, Num. xvi. 18. but an apprehension of God's being on their side, from some appearance of his to them), and as Balaam had, whose eyes were opened to see the beauty of the tents of Jacob; yet these, through the prevalency of the fleshly lusts and wisdom, become enemies, and try always to prevail over Israel, even over the truth, and over the power. The Apostle Jude compares such to the angels that kept not their first estate. The angels that fell had a place and standing once in the truth; but they kept it not (they abode not in the truth) but fell from it, and so became devils, enemies to the truth from which they fell: so those that fall from the truth, from the power, from the living virtue whereof they once tasted, from the true wisdom which once appeared to them, and began to season and savor them, in their fallen wisdom they became the greatest enemies, the greatest accusers, the greatest opposers, and the stiffest maintainers of a false image of that truth which they once had some knowledge of, and some unity with. Thus it was in the Jewish state: now come to the apostles' days.

First, They had all the wise men of that age against them; all the wise Greeks, all the wise Jews, the learned men, the able disputants of all sorts. The Greeks could not find wisdom in that knowledge of Christ which they held forth, nor could the Jews find power in it, 1 Cor. i. 22. and so one accounted it foolishness, the other stumbled at it. ver. 23. There were many sorts and sects of wise men among the Jews; but not one sort could own the truth, though they were looking for it, searching the Scriptures about it, and disputing concerning it. The very thing then in agitation and inquiry among them was, *when the kingdom of God should come.* The King himself directs them where

it was, that they might know where to expect and wait for it, Luke xvii. 21. and in many parables opens it to them; but it was still hid from the eye of that wisdom wherewith they did strive to see, understand, and comprehend it. So that all the several sorts of wise men of that age, even those who were admirers of the law and the prophets, yet were strangers and enemies to the truth, because they joined to that wisdom, and to that learning and comprehension of the Scriptures, out of the sight whereof it came.

Secondly, For such as did own Christ after the flesh, such as were convinced by his miracles (as Nicodemus and many of the honester sort of the Jews were), yet Christ did not commit himself to them. John ii. 24. He knew this faith and this owning of him, which was founded upon the wisdom and ingenuity of the creature, would fail; and so he would not own it in Nicodemus, but bids him look after the new birth, John iii. 2, 3. nor in such as followed him up and down, upon this or any other fleshly account, but sometimes withdrew, and hid himself from them, Luke v. 16. John vi. 14, 15. and sometimes preached doctrines which stumbled them, and made them withdraw from him. John vi. 66. And so in the apostles' days, there were many could get the form, and gain advantage thereby to the fleshly wisdom, to withstand the power. 2 Tim. iii. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 13.

Thirdly, There were such as had tasted of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come, and yet fell away. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. There were such as denied the Lord that bought them. 2 Pet. ii. 1. Such as fell from the love of the truth to the love of their vomit, and of the mire of the world again. ver. 22. 2 Tim. iv. 10. Such as had a standing in the church's heaven (like the angels which fell), but kept not their habitation, but were swept down from thence to the earth by the dragon's tail, Rev. xii. 4. these are the noblest champions (in the earthly wisdom, and for a corrupted estate and false image) of all the rest.

Now as the prophets of God among the Jews had these enemies, and as the apostles also had these enemies, so all along the apostasy these enemies have been rife. The wit-

nesses have a wise sort of direct opposers among the Papists, a wise sort of secret underminers among the Protestants, and also another wise sort of such among themselves as had some taste of the truth, but departed from the power of it into the earthly wisdom, into the earthly understanding; and this last sort fight more furiously and more vehemently against the truth, and are more subtle to assault it, and grapple with it, than the other two. Oh! there is no such bitter, deadly enemy to Christ and his Truth, as he who once had some taste of the virtue of it, and is now turned from it into the earth, into the wisdom and love of the world, and yet still holds some of the notion of that truth (whereof he once felt the power) in the earthly part.

To come yet closer. There is in every man, not thoroughly sanctified, that wisdom which is not of God; that wisdom from which God hides his precious truths; which wisdom lies ready to catch every discovery and revelation of truth to him, that it might improve it, and grow rich and wise by it. Now this wisdom cannot attain to the knowledge of any of the things of God: neither can this wisdom keep the true knowledge; but whatever this wisdom catcheth, it presently corrupts. The true wisdom, the true light, the true knowledge of Christ, is like the manna in the wilderness; it daily comes down from heaven, and must daily be gathered fresh. The true light springs from the life; and it must be held in the life, in the vessel which the life forms, in the new bottle, in the new understanding; not in the fleshly part, nay, not in the natural part: for as the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 14. so neither can he retain them. The old storehouse, into which earthly things were gathered, must be burned up, and not made a treasury for the things of God; but the new understanding, which is given by him that is true, 1 John v. 20. which new-forms and preserves, and is all in the natural. Sink out of the earthly part, and read me, that thou mayest be able to say within thyself, and concerning thyself, Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer?

The wise part, the knowing part, the reaching part in every man, will be putting forth its hand to gather of the tree of life; but what hath it ever been able to gather? I know men may gather notions of any kind, of any sect, of any sort of profession, of any appearance or dispensation; but who is able to come near the life, to touch the power, the truth, the everlasting spring, or any stream or drop of water that issues from it? And he who hath a true touch or taste thereof given him, can his wisdom add to it? Nay, can he so much as retain it? David had a true sense and experience of this, who cried out, "Oh continue thy loving-kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart." Indeed if he like not to retain the thing itself in his knowledge, he may improve the notion, and bend that to the temperature and disposition of the earthly part in himself and others; but this is not truth, but a dead image, or a dead remembrance of what once was truly living. Oh! how doth the soul that is begotten of the divine breath, that is born of the living power and virtue, depend upon God for his continual breathings! There is nothing that hath so much from God, and yet nothing is so little able to live without him. If he withdraw from it, it presently hangs down its head: nay, if he do but so much as hide his face, it is troubled; and all the fulness, which it immediately before had from God, is not able to keep up its life one moment; but it pants, and fails, and flags, and withers, until a new supply of refreshment be administered to it. And he that knows this in any measure will not wonder at the distress and misery of such for want of God's presence; and at their cryings-out after the spring of their life (even as the hart brayeth after the water-brooks), though they should have fulness of all outward things, yea, and also fulness of knowledge in things of religion, even concerning all conditions and estates. The thing that I wanted in my great misery, it was not outward knowledge, it was not experience of God's mercy and goodness; but this I wanted, the issuings-forth of his fresh life, and livingly to know where to wait for it, and livingly to know it when it ap-

peared: for it was still near me all the time of my darkness, and did preserve me, and appear unto me; but I livingly knew it not, but thought I would be wiser than others: for I saw many deceived, and so I would not own it in such a way as it then appeared in me, lest I also should be deceived like others; but waited for such an appearance as could not be questioned by the fleshly wisdom. And he that waits for that, and so despises the day of small things, cannot but refuse the little seed; and so, not being received into his earth, it can never grow up in him into a great tree; whereby the glory of the kingdom will be hid from him, and he shut out of it, when others enter into and sit down in it. Therefore, *he that will be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise;* let him receive that for his light, his king, his guide, which man's wisdom never did, nor never will, own. He that ever looks to enjoy the Comforter, let him receive the Reprover, the Convincer of sin, and wait for his law of judging him throughout the whole course of his sinful state and nature, passing along with him through the whole condemnation, until he arrive with him at the justification of the life, which the fleshly wisdom, nor any of his knowledge of the things of God (as they are held in the fleshly part) must never arrive with him at.

Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

The wisdom of this world is precious in the eye of the world; and the wisdom of God in his poor, weak, despised earthen vessels is still foolishness with them; but the Lord so orders it, that he still justifies his despised wisdom in his despised vessels, and makes the wisdom of the world appear foolish to all the single and upright-hearted, who thirst after and wait for the revelation of his truth. Now two ways especially the Lord makes the folly of this world's wisdom appear.

First, In that by all their wisdom they cannot find out the true knowledge of God. ver. 21. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Though there be an exceeding desire kindled in them to know God; though they take all the ways that heart can imagine to attain their desires; though

they study and meditate ever so hard; though they get ever so many arts and languages; nay, though they read the very Scriptures ever so diligently; though they *labor in the very fire;* yet what they get, what they gather, what they understand, what they comprehend by this wisdom, it is all but "very vanity." Heb. ii. 13. It reaches not the immortal, it nourishes not the immortal, it satisfies not the soul, it refreshes not the seed; but only feeds and pleases the earthly part, the earthly understanding, the earthly mind, the earthly desires and affections; even the man's part, the man's spirit, the man's nature; which, though elevated and raised ever so high, is still but earth.

Secondly, In that all their wisdom cannot teach them to come down to, to submit to, to come into God's way of having their wisdom crucified, and that raised up in them which might receive the truth. This they can never learn in the fleshly wisdom. They may indeed come thus far, even to see that there is no way of entrance but by death; and to seek death (that they may enter into the life), but they cannot find it. The seed of Jacob, in his seeking, misses not; but this seeker never finds; to this asker it is never given, and to this knocker it is never opened: and that is it which makes this wisdom in every appearance, in every sort of profession and sect of professors, so rage at the seed of Jacob, even because it finds itself still shut out of the life, into which an entrance is administered to the seed. And how can that which would fain have the kingdom, but rage against that which takes the inheritance from it? How can every sort of professors but strive to slay the heir, that the inheritance may be theirs? Were it not for the living seed, and the living power and virtue, which breaks forth in them and among them, the religion and worship of the first birth might pass for current; but this is it which darkens the glory of all professions and professors upon the earth, even that living thing which God hath begotten in his people, and his living presence with it, and blessing upon it. At this all the zealous sacrificers, teachers, and professors, out of the life, rage and are mad, and would

break the cords and bands wherewith this strives to bind them unto God's altar.

Now look over all ages: Could the wise heathens stoop to God's dispensation to the Jews? Was it not foolishness and abomination to them? Or could the wise Jews stoop to the law within, to the word in the heart (although directed thereto by Moses, Deut. xxx. 14.) to learn there to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God? Mic. vi. 8. Could they wait there to have their hearts circumcised by that word of power, and so to be washed and made clean? Nay, were they not drowned in the outward sacrifices, temple, incense, new-moons and sabbaths, and such kind of observations, and could not hear the truth of the Lord as it was delivered by Moses, nor as it was opened by the prophets. Isa. i. 11. So that this people, seeking to know the Lord from the letter by this wisdom, could never come to the knowledge of him; but the place of his light and wisdom was hid from them.

Again, when Christ came, and the kingdom was preached, and the everlasting way of redemption and salvation made manifest, could the wise eye in the Greeks, or the wise eye in the Jews, see it? Did not the Greeks shut themselves out by a wisdom above the letter (as they thought), and the Jews by a knowledge and wisdom which they had gathered out of the letter? How wise were they from the letter to reason against the King of life? "This man cannot be of God, for he is a breaker of his sabbaths. He is a Nazarite, and can any good thing come out of Nazareth? He saith the Son of man must be lifted up; but we read that Christ abideth for ever. He is against God's temple, against God's day of worship, gives his disciples such scope and liberty, as neither the Pharisees nor John gave their disciples; but reviles our strict and godly teachers and expounders of the law, calling them hypocrites, blind guides, &c. And mark with what a rough, severe spirit he reproves them; whereas they call him master, and speak mildly and gently to him." Oh! what Jew in that nature, in that wisdom, in that spirit,

could but find matter and occasion of stumbling at Christ, even from the law and the prophets!

And as they stumbled at the true Christ, so have all the generations of wise men since the apostasy, all the learned men generally (their councils, synods, convocations, and assemblies) stumbled at the true church, looking for some such like building as had been in the apostles' days, and not understanding or observing how the Lord took down that building (as it had been set up in the world), and how he prepared a place in the wilderness for his true church, unto which he gave her wings to fly. Rev. xii. And how afterwards the false woman, or false church, got up in her stead, who, with a golden cup of fornication, bewitched the kings and inhabiters of the earth, Rev. xvii. 2. even peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, ver. 15. so that they mistook her for the true church, and went into her bed of whoredoms. Which of all the learned men, which of all the councils of the Papists has seen this? Nay, which of the Protestant councils or convocations or assemblies, has beheld the state of the true church? Nay, have not every sort and sect of the Protestants endeavored to build up some image or likeness of the true church; not so much as suspecting that she was fled into, and was to abide in, the wilderness for a time, times, and half a time? Oh, what darkness hath covered the earth! Oh, how hath God befooled the wise of every sort! the wise men of every age! the wise Protestants, as well as the wise Papists! the wise Independents and Baptists, as well as the wise Episcopalians and Presbyterians! and how blind and sottish are nations, and peoples, that still they think to find out the truth by having a synod, assembly, or convocation of the wise men gathered together! Indeed they are the fittest to rear up an image to please the earthly part of man, and the earthly powers and interests with; but truth never came in by that way, but the wise and learned have still been shut out from it, and have proved enemies to it. And whosoever comes out of the apostasy from the Spirit and from the truth, to the Spirit and truth again, shall find nothing so great an enemy

as the wisdom in himself, and directions from the wisdom in others: for that which God leads is a simple, a weak babe, a child to the wisdom of the world; and he leads it in a path which is wholly out of the line of this world's wisdom, and knowledge of the Scriptures, as the path God chose in Christ's and the apostles' days was out of the line of the Jews' knowledge of the Scriptures. Such is the recovery out of the apostasy: it is hid from all the fleshly-wise men of this age, even as the entrance into the truths of the kingdom was hid from all the fleshly-wise men of that age. Happy is he who ceaseth from striving after the knowledge and comprehending of the things of God in this world's spirit and wisdom, and waiteth in the humility and fear of the Lord, first to be made a fool, that afterwards he may be made wise unto everlasting life.

L. P.

LETTERS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON.

To a Near Relative.

Ah! Dear ——,

Why dost thou so often give me occasion of mourning before the Lord, on account of hard and unrighteous charges from thee! How often have I solemnly professed, that there was never any desire in me, or endeavor used by me, to draw thee to this way [of religious profession]. All that is in my soul is this, that thou mightst have the true knowledge of Christ, that thou mightst indeed hear his sayings, and do them, and not set up thy own or other men's imaginations and invented reasonings, instead of the sayings of Christ.

Now, though I am not for ways or opinions, but only for Christ, the substance, the living power of God in the heart; yet, because thou stumblest at these things, and, through prejudice, refusest the living testimony of God concerning Christ, the Rock, building upon that which thou hast imagined concerning the Saviour, in love and pity to thy soul, I cannot but say somewhat; for who knows but God may, at length, give thee repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, and to the disclaiming of the way of error.

Thou layest down three reasons why thou canst not believe this way to be of God.

First, *That God's way is a way of love, peace, and unity.*

Ans. If thou hadst that eye which can see the things of

God, and didst apply thyself to look therewith, thou mightst see that peace, that love, that unity, among this people, [Friends] which other men do but talk of. But, if thou take things by the report of the enemies both to God and them, thou shalt be sure to hear and believe bad enough.

They have no war with any thing but unrighteousness, and with that they cannot have peace, no, not in their dearest relations. They love the souls of their enemies, and think no pains or hazard too much for the saving of them; being persecuted, they bless; being reviled, they entreat, and pray for their persecutors. They are at unity with whatever is of God; but with the seed of the serpent, they cannot be at unity: they know the "generation of vipers" in this present age, and can witness against them under their several painted coverings, as freely as ever Christ and his apostles did against the Scribes and Pharisees. For the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees is now in the world, as is also the Spirit of Christ and his apostles, and they cannot but fight, each with their proper weapons; the one with their stocks, whips, fines, prisons, &c., the other with the spiritual armor of Christ. Thus the one of these wrestles with flesh and blood, fights with the creature, hurts that; the other loves the creature, seeks the saving of it, and fights only with the power of darkness, which rules the creature. Now which of these are the ministers of Christ? These that stir up the magistrate to afflict the body, or these that use the sword of the Spirit to wound the conscience?

And this peace, this love, this unity they attain, not by their own strivings, but by receiving it from above. Indeed, all our religion lies in receiving a gift, without which we are nothing, and can do nothing, and in which nothing is too hard for us. Yea, being kept in that, up to God, we can do all things, we can believe all things, we can suffer all things. Never was there a generation brought forth weaker in themselves, more foolish, more ridiculous to the fleshly wisdom, more exposed to sufferings from the world and worldly professors; yet, being kept faithful to Him that hath called us, we sometimes feel strength and wisdom, even such as the

most zealous in the worldly ways of religion have not an ear to hear the relation of.

Secondly, Thou sayest *that God's way is a way of humility.*

Ans. If this people had not been humbled and broken by God, they could never have entered into a way which the lofty, fleshly part abhors; nor is this a voluntary humility, but a humility which crosseth and breaketh the will all the day long. Thou judgest at a distance, and with that which is not to judge, but to be judged.

Thirdly, *That God is a God of order, and not of confusion.*

Ans. Blessed be the Lord, who hath recovered somewhat of the true church's order for us, and delivered out of the confusion of antichrist. We know order in the light, order in the Spirit, order in Christ, the Truth; but that which man, in his wisdom, calls order is but antichrist's order, which, with God, is confusion. To have man's spirit speak, and God's Spirit stopped, this is the order of all the antichristian congregations and churches; but to have man's spirit stopped, and God's Spirit speak, this is the order of Christ's church. It is this order we know and rejoice in, finding that raised in us, which teaches us to "cease from man," and *his* voice [as man] is not at all "accounted of;" but the voice of the living God is heard, known, loved, and obeyed, by that which he hath quickened in us, and made to live to himself. The Lord is judging that which loved man's meanings and inventions, all that the human part in us could gather from the Scriptures, and is nourishing that which is of himself, that which can receive no food but from his hand.

Thou believest not that Mr. Gurdon (as the world calls him), or any other godly man doth persecute these people for the exercise of their consciences.

Ans. I know no godly man can persecute: the lamb did never worry the wolf. But the grossest persons will not acknowledge that they persecute for conscience, but accuse those whom they persecute for evil-doers, and say they suffer as evil-doers. Canst not thou see the narrowness of this covering? Would the Scribes and Pharisees, and zealous

among the Jews confess, that they put Christ and Stephen to death for conscience? Did they not put them to death as evil-doers, as blasphemers, as speaking against the holy temple of God, the laws and ordinances of Moses? Ah! ——, the children of wisdom were never justified by that wisdom wherewith thou judgest of things. The Scribes and Pharisees were as confident that Christ and his disciples were deceivers, and that they brought up a new way of religion contrary to Moses, as any can be that *these* people are deceivers, and that their way is new. The scene is turned; the same things that were then are now; and the eye of that spirit is as blind now as it was then; it cannot see its own deceit.

Oh, pierce into the nature of things! set not up shadows instead of the Truth; wait for the gift; receive the true love, the true peace, the true unity, the true humility, which lies not in the will of the creature, but destroys it; then we shall soon know one another, and have comfort one in another.

I. P.

14th of Twelfth Month, 1658.

To a Parent.

Dear Friend,

I have not much freedom to write at present, being retired in spirit, and mourning to my God, for the powerful bringing forth of his pure life, yet more perfectly, both in myself and others; yet the spirit of thy letter doth so strongly draw, that I cannot be wholly silent.

This, therefore, in the uprightness, fear, and tenderness of my heart, I say to thee.

There is a pure principle of life in the heart, from whence all good springs. This thou art to mind in thyself; and this, thou art to wait on the Lord, to be taught and enabled by him to reach to, in thy children; that thou mayst be an instrument in his hand, to bring them into that fear of him, which is acceptable to him, and will be profitable to them. Mind, therefore, its leadings in thy heart, and wait to be

acquainted with its voice there. And, when thy children ask thee any questions of this nature, What God is; where he dwells; or whether he sees them in the dark; do not reject it; but wait to feel somewhat of God raised in thee, which is able to judge, whether the question be put forth in sensibility or in vanity; and which can give thee an advantage of stirring the good, and reaching to that, which is to be raised both in young and old, to live to the praise of him who raiseth it. And take heed of a judgment after the flesh; for so thou mayst judge us, our principles and practices, and approve or disapprove, &c. But wait to feel that raised in thee, which judges righteous judgment in every particular; and wait the time of its judgment, and be still and silent, further than manifestly thou knowest that it, and not thou, judgeth.

And, as to thy children, daily feel the need of instruction from the Almighty, to govern and direct them, and wait daily to receive it from him; and what thou receivest, give forth in fear, and wait for his carrying it home and working it upon their hearts. For he is a Father, and hath tenderness, and gives true wisdom to every condition of his people, that wait upon him; so as *he* may be known to be all daily, and *they* able to be nothing without him.

Breathe unto the Lord, that thy heart may be single, thy judgment set straight by his principle of life in thee, and thy children guided to, and brought up in, the sense of the same principle. As for praying, they will not need to be taught that outwardly; but, if a true sense be kindled in them, though ever so young, from that sense will arise breathings to Him that begat it, suitable to their state; which will cause growth and increase of that sense and life in them.

Thus, in the plainness of my heart, have I answered thee, according to the drawings and freedom which I found there, which I dare not exceed; who am thy unfeigned Friend, though outwardly unknown,

I. P.

20th of Third Month, 1665.

To Bridget Atley.

Dear Friend,

I know thy soul desires to live; and my soul desireth that thou mightst live. Oh! why art thou so backward to hearken to the voice which is nigh thee, wherein is life? why dost thou reason? why dost thou consult? why dost thou expect? why dost thou hope? why dost thou believe against thy own soul?

The snares of the subtle one will entangle for ever, unless thou wait for, hearken to, and obey the voice of the living God, who leads the single-hearted and obedient out of them. Is there any way of life but one? Is not the Lord leading his children in that way? Must not all that come after, follow in the foot-steps of those that go before? Is there any Saviour, but the seed of life and the Father of it? Is it not the same in thee as in others? Hath it not the same voice? Oh that thou hadst the same ear and the same heart, that thou mightst hear, receive, and live! They wait aright; dost thou wait so? They hope aright; dost thou hope so? If not, what will thy waiting and expecting come to? In *that*, which hath sometimes inclined thy heart, *there* is truth, *there* were the beginnings of salvation; but in *that* which draws thee out to expect some great matters, and dries up thy present sense, and hinders thy present subjection, *therein* is deceit, and the destruction of thy soul. Therefore, if thou desire and love the salvation thereof, Oh hasten, hasten out of it! wait for the reproofs of wisdom; and what it manifests to be of the earthly and worldly nature in thee (the words, ways, thoughts, customs thereof), hasten out of. Oh, turn thy back upon the world with speed, and turn thy face towards the heavenly wisdom and light eternal! which will be springing up in thee, if thou turn thy back upon the world, and wait for it.

And do not look for such great matters to begin with, but be content to be a child, and let the Father proportion out daily to thee what light, what power, what exercises,

what straits, what fears, what troubles he sees fit for thee; and do thou bow before him continually, in humility of heart, who hath the disposal of thee, whether to life or death for ever. Ah! that wisdom which would be choosing must be confounded, and the low, humble thing raised, which submits and cries to the Father in every condition. And in waiting to feel this, and in joining to this, thou mayst meet with life; but death, destruction, and separation from God is the portion of the other for ever! Oh, that thou mayst be separated from it, and joined to the seed and birth of God; that, in it, thy soul may spring up to know, serve, and worship the Lord, and to wait daily to be formed by him, until thou become perfectly like him. But thou must join in with the beginnings of life, and be exercised with the day of small things, before thou meet with the great things, wherein is the clearness and satisfaction of the soul. The rest is at noon-day; but the travels begin at the breakings of day, wherein are but glimmerings, or little light, wherein the discovery of good and evil is not so manifest and certain; yet there must the traveller begin and travel; and in his faithful travels (in much fear and trembling, lest he should err), the light will break in upon him more and more.

This have I written in tenderness to thee, that thou mightest not miss of the path of the living, which is appointed of the Father to lead, and alone can lead, the soul to life. Oh! that thou mightest be enlightened and quickened by the Lord to walk therein, and mightest be thankful for, and content with, what he gives thee, and walk therein, from the evil to the good, from the earthly to the heavenly nature daily, and mightest not despise the cross or the shame of the seed. For I know there is a wisdom in thee, which will despise and turn from it, until the Lord batter and crucify it; and I can hardly put up a more proper request for thee, than that the Lord would draw out his sword against it, and deeply perplex and confound it in thee.

I. P.

1665.

TO ONE WHO SENT A PAPER OF RICHARD BAXTER'S.

DEAR FRIEND,

Whom I often remember with love and meltings of heart; desiring of God, that thou mayst enjoy, in this world, what of his presence and pure life he judgeth fit for thee, and that thy soul may, after this life, sit down in rest and peace with him for ever.

I received from thee a paper of Richard Baxter's, sent, I believe, in love; and, in love, am I pressed to return unto thee my sense thereof. It seems to me very useful and weighty as far as it goes; but, indeed, there is a great defect in it, in not directing sinners to that principle of life and power, wherein and whereby they may do that which he exhorteth them to do. For how can they come to a true sensibility or repentance, or join in covenant with God through Christ, until they know and receive somewhat from God, wherein it may be done? O my dear friend! that he, and thou, and all who in any measure turn from this world, and do indeed desire life eternal, might know the instruction of life, and feel that from God wherein he is known, loved, and joined with in covenant; that so, there might be a pure beginning, a pure growth and going on unto perfection, and not notions concerning things set up in the earthly understanding, which easily putrify and defile; but pure life, felt and enjoyed in the heart, which is undefiled, and never saw nor shall see corruption. I have not freedom to write many words; but my love breathes for thee, and my life desires fellowship with thee, (if it may seem good unto my God,) in that which is pure of him, and will remain so for ever.

And whatever men may say or think of me, I have no other religion now, than I had from the beginning; only a clearer leading into and guidance by that principle of life, in and through which, it pleased the Lord then to quicken me. And this is it, which I have daily experience of in my heart; that it is no less than the light of the everlasting day,

in which the renewed man is to walk, and no less than the life of the Son, (whom God gave a ransom for sinners,) which can quicken man so to do; and none but Christ, none but Christ, by his life revealed in the soul, and blood shed there to wash it, can save the poor sinner from sin, wrath, and misery; and my hope is not in what I have done, do, or can do; but in what he hath done *without me*, and also doth *in me*.

This is the account of my love unto thee, drawn forth at this time by the outward expression of thine in sending that paper, who remain, and, from my first acquaintance, have ever been, a Friend and lover of thee.

I. P.

Peter's Chalfonte,
19th of Sixth Month, 1665.

To a Friend in London; supposed to be written on occasion of the Plague.

Ah! Friend,

Dreadful is the Lord: it is now known and felt, beyond what can be spoken. Doth thy heart fear before him? art thou willing to be subject to him? dost thou desire strength from him, to trust thyself and thy family with him? Oh that thou mayst be helped daily to cry unto him, that he may have mercy upon thee, who is tender-hearted and able to preserve, when his arrows fly round about!

Retire, deeply retire, and wait to feel his life; that thy soul may be gathered out of the reasonings and thoughts of thy mind, into that which stays from them, and fixes beneath them; where the Lord is known and worshipped, in that which is of himself, of his own begetting, of his own forming, of his own preserving, of his own shutting and opening at his pleasure. And, living in the sense and pure fear of the Lord (not meddling to judge others or justify thyself, but waiting for his appearance in thee, who is the justifier and justification), thou wilt be enabled by the Lord, in his seasons, to bring thy children and family into the

same sense; that thou and they together may enjoy the same preservation from him, so far as he sees meet, whose will is not to be limited, but to be subjected to.

And if thy heart be right before the Lord, and thy soul awakened and preserved in his fear, thou wilt find somewhat to travel out of, and somewhat to travel into, and the Lord drawing and leading thee. And this stroke, which is so dreadful to others, nor altogether without dread to thee, will prove of great advantage in thy behalf; in drawing thee more into a sense and acquaintance of the infinite One, and in drawing thee from thy earthly thoughts and knowledge, which will not now stand thee instead.

Thy Friend,

I. P.

8th of Seventh Month, 1665.

To Elizabeth Walmsley.

Dear Friend,

My heart was exceedingly melted within me at the reading of thy precious and tender lines; yea, indeed, I was quite overcome, and was fain several times to break off, the freshness and strength of life in them did so flow in upon me; and I said again and again in my heart, It is the very voice of my Father's child, whose sound did deeply reach to and refresh my very soul. And this my heart saith, Blessed be my God, for his tender mercies to thee, in visiting, leading, and preserving thee to this day, and for teaching his seed thus to speak in thee. Oh! let his praise live and abound in thy breast for ever! And in the flowings and streamings of this life, remember me at the throne of my Father's mercy, by which alone I live, and have hope before him.

May the mercies, blessing, and pure presence of my God fill thy soul, and rest upon thee for ever! Amen! Amen!

Thus prayeth for thee thy unfeigned Friend, and dear lover of the pure seed of life in thee,

I. P.

Mind my dear love to thy sister, whose inward welfare and prosperity I desire, even that she may be one with thee in the seed and life of God.

Aylesbury Jail,
19th of Eighth Month, 1665.

To my Friends at Horton and thereabouts.

There hath been a cloudy and dark day, wherein God's church and building hath been laid waste, and his holy city (according to his decree and purpose) trodden under foot by the Gentiles; all which time, his church hath been as a desolate widow, mourning in the wilderness. Yet, during this season, God hath not left his people; but there have been breathings and stirrings of life in and from the precious seed; in which breathings of life, they have seen somewhat of the beauty of the built state, and have had true desires and longings after it: but, in the midst of these desires, the enemy hath struck in upon their spirits, and put them upon pressing more forward towards it, than they have been truly led. So reading in the Scriptures of a church state and church orders, &c., they thought it was their duty to set on building; and so have thrust themselves into these things, in which they have not been accepted of the Lord; though, in their breathings and true desires, they were accepted. And what hath been the issue of these buildings? Ah! the pure seed hath been buried in them, they have been as a grave to it; and their own imaginations, and wrought-out knowledge, and way of worship, have been of high esteem.

O Lord my God! raise again, I beseech thee, the pure life, and those pure breathings which have been drowned, lost, and buried in these buildings!

Now, dear Friends, the Lord alone built his church at the first. The Lord also laid the buildings waste, and carried his living temple, out of the shell of it, into a wilderness. And the Lord alone can lead his church out of the wilderness (leaning upon her Beloved), into her built state again. Ah! dear Friends, all must be scattered, all must be scat-

tered, all the gatherings, all the buildings, which are not of the Lord, that his gathering, his building, may be known and exalted in the earth: so that I would not have you hold up any thing in this day of the Lord (it is so indeed), against the light and power of the Lord. The Lord is able, and will maintain his building, however weak and low of esteem it be in the eye of man; but man shall not be able to maintain his buildings, however high and strong in his own eye. Yea, every high tower and every fenced city shall fall before the dread of His presence, who hath now appeared among his poor, desolate people, and gathered them within the verge of his power: blessed be his holy name for ever!

And since my spirit is at this time thus unexpectedly opened, in love and in life, towards you, I shall mention one or two great snares, which I see professors entangled in, that you may wait on the Lord, to escape the evil and danger of them. One is this; they look too much at *outward time* and *outward things*, and their expectations are too much that way. Oh let it not be so with you! but wait for the inward day, wherein the things of God are wrought in the heart. And take heed to your steps, thoughts, and ways; for the Lord, who hath long tenderly visited, is now laying stumbling-blocks; and not only the world, but even professors also, shall be hardened, snared, fall, and be taken; and this word shall be fulfilled, even among them, "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." But woe unto him that hath stumbled at the living appearance of God's precious truth in this our day, and in his wisdom hath been exalted above that which he should have fallen down before! Oh that none of you (whom I have dearly loved, and still love, and whom I have truly sought in the Lord, and still seek) ever prove sad examples and spectacles of what I now write in a living, feeling sense! Oh that that which hath mourned and is oppressed among you might live, and rise up in the power of life, over that which hath grieved and oppresseth it! for, of a truth, I feel among you a wisdom and knowledge, which is not of the seed, but oppresseth it. Oh, what plainness of speech doth the Lord give me towards

you! Indeed, I am melted in concern for you; and, in the strength of that love which searches into your bosoms, desire, that the abominable thing among you might be discovered and purged out, and that which is indeed of God might spring up, live, and flourish among you.

A second thing, wherein professors grievously mistake, is, about *praying in the name of Christ;* in which name, he that asketh receiveth; and out of which, there is no right asking of the Father. They think that praying in the name of Christ consists in using some outward words; as, "Do this for thy Son's sake," or "We beg of thee in Christ's name;" whereas, that in the heart which knoweth not the Father may use such words; and that which is taught of the Father to pray, and prayeth in the Son, may not be led to use those words. *The name*, wherein the asking and acceptance is, *is living*; and he that prayeth in the motion of the Spirit, and in the power and virtue of the Son's life, *he* prayeth *in the name*, and his voice is owned of the Father; and not the other, who hath learned in his own will, time, and spirit to use those words relative to the Son.

Another thing, wherein professors exceedingly err and mistake, is, about the applying of Christ's righteousness, which is only rightly done in the Spirit, where the application hath its true virtue. But man's misapplication hath no virtue; for, notwithstanding that, his sins remain; and so the comfort, hope, and joy in his heart, that his sins are pardoned is only a pleasing dream, which will deceive him when he awakes, and finds his sins not blotted out by God, but only in his own apprehension.

Ah Friends, that ye might travel into truth, and meet with the unerring substance of things, that ye might live, and not die! and then ye will see how man hath erred, and errs, yea, even the man in *you;* and that the seed only, and they that are born of the seed, know the living truth, and walk in the living path, where there is no error, no deceit, but a perfect preservation out of them. There, it is my desire to meet and embrace you, in the dear bowels of love, where we may unite, and know one another, in the spiritual

birth and life, inseparably, for ever; if we daily mourn after, and faithfully wait upon, the true guide and leader thereunto.

I remain your imprisoned Friend, according to the wisdom of God, and in his pure content and fear; though the wisdom of man might easily have avoided these bonds.

I. P.

Aylesbury Jail,
22d of Eighth Month, 1665.

To Friends of Truth in and about the two Chalfonts.

Dear Friends:

I am separated, as to bodily presence, from you; but I cannot forget you, because ye are written on my heart, and I cannot but desire your peace and welfare, as of my own soul.

And this is my present cry for you. Oh that ye might feel the breath of life, that life which at first quickened you, and which still quickeneth! and that breath of life has power over death; and being felt by you, will bow down death in you, and ye will feel the seed lifting up its head over that which oppresseth it. Why should the royal birth be a captive in any of you? Why should any of you travail, and not bring forth? Why should sin have dominion in any of you, and not rather grace reign in its life and power in you all? Oh that ye may receive quickenings! Oh that ye may receive help! Oh that ye may be led into the true subjection, which brings forth the true dominion! Indeed, I cry for my own soul, and I cry for yours also, that in one virtue and power of life, we may be knit together, and serve the Lord our God in perfect unity of spirit.

My Friends, what shall I say unto you? Oh! the Lord keep you living and sensible, and let your walking and converse be with him, both in private and in your assemblings; be serious in your spirits, that ye may feel the weight of his seed springing up in you, and resting upon you, to poise your hearts towards him. And let the earthly thoughts,

desires, and concerns, which eat like a canker, be kept out by the power of that life, which is yours, as ye abide in covenant with him that hath gathered you, by his pure light shining in you. Oh that ye may all dwell there! and not draw back into the earthly nature, where the enemy lies lurking to entangle and to catch your minds, and bring you to a loss.

Feel my love and tender care of you in the quickening life of God; and the Lord God watch over you for good, to perfect his work in you, and draw your hearts nearer and nearer to himself, until they be quite swallowed up of him; that ye may at last find your hearts fitted for, and welcomed into, the bosom of your Beloved, and there may sit down in the rest and joy of his fulness for evermore; which is the blessed end of the Lord's love to you, and all the faithful travails which have been for you.

Your Friend and brother in the Truth.

I. P.

From my place of confinement in Aylesbury,
20th of Fourth Month, 1666.

Even when ye were sitting together, waiting on the Lord (some of you, I doubt not), did these things spring up in my heart towards you; and if ye taste any sweetness or refreshment in them, bow to the Fountain, and be sensible of his praise springing in the midst of you.

To Elizabeth Walmsley, of Giles Chalfont.

Dear Friend,

The thoughts of thee are pleasant to me; indeed, I am melted with the sense of the Lord's love to thee, as to my own soul.

What were we, that the Lord should stretch forth his arm to us, and gather us? And what are we, that the Lord should daily remember us, in the issuings-forth of his loving-kindness and mercies? Oh his pity, his compassion! (must I for ever say) that my soul yet lives, and hath hope before him!

And canst not thou also say the same? Oh, my friend! we feel mercy and salvation from the Lord. Oh, that he might have pure praise and service from his own in us! and yet, that will be little thanks to us, but rather a new mercy received from him. But all is his own, and of his own do we give him; and that, only when he quickens, helps, and enables us to give. Dear friend, my desire for thee is, that the power and blessings of life may descend upon thee, and that thou mayst feel thy God near, and thy heart still ready to let him in, and shut against all that is of a contrary nature to his; that thou mayst know that death passing upon thee, and perfected in thee, which prepares for, and lets into, the fulness of his pure, unspotted life.

Thou mayst commend my dear love to thy sister, and to all Friends, as thou hast opportunity, who breathe after the Lord, and desire in uprightness of heart to walk with him.

I am thy Friend, in the affection which is of the Truth.

I. P.

Aylesbury.
20th of Fourth Month, 1666.

To the Earl of Bridgewater.

Friend,

It is the desire of my heart to walk with God, in the true fear of his name, and in true love and good-will to all men, all my days here upon the earth. For this end, I wait upon God night and day, to know his will, and to receive certain instruction from him, concerning what is acceptable in his sight. After he hath in any thing made manifest his pleasure, I wait upon him for strength to perform it: and when he hath wrought it by me, my soul blesseth him therefor. If this be a right course, I am not to be condemned herein: if it be not, and thou knowest better, show me, in love meekness, and tenderness; as I would be willing to make any thing known to thee, for thy good, which the Lord hath shown me.

But this I am fully assured of, that God is higher than

man: and that his will and laws are to be set up, and obeyed, in the first place; and man's only in the second; and in their due subordination to the will and laws of God.

Now Friend, apply thyself to do that which is right and noble, and that which is truly justifiable in God's sight, that thou mayst give a comfortable account to him, when he shall call thereunto. That which thou hast done to me, hath not made me thy enemy; but in the midst of the sense of it, I desire thy welfare, and that thou mayst so carry thyself in thy place and actions, as that thou mayst neither provoke God against thee in this world, nor in the world to come. Hast thou not yet afflicted me enough without cause? Wouldst thou have me bow to thee therein, wherein the Lord hath not given me liberty? If I should give thee outward titles and honors, might I not do thee hurt? Oh come down, be low in thy spirit before the Lord! Honor him in thy heart and ways, and wait for the true nobility and honor from him. Thou hast but a time to be in the world, and then eternity begins: and what thou hast sown here, thou must then reap. Oh that thou mightst sow, not to thy own will and wisdom, but to God's Spirit; and know his guidance, who is only able to lead man aright. Indeed, thou shouldst be subject in thy own heart, to that which thou art offended at in others, even that in the inner parts, which testifies for God and against the thoughts, ways, and works of corrupt man; that thou mightst feel a principle of life from God, and good fruit brought forth from that principle to him; and that the evil nature, with the evil works thereof, might be cut down in thee; that thy soul may escape the wrath and misery, which attend the works and workers of iniquity.

I have sent thee this enclosed, in love. Read it in fear and humility, lifting up thy heart to the Lord, who giveth understanding, that it may be a blessing to thee; for in true love was it written, and is of a healing and guiding nature. I have formerly written to thee; but my way hath been so barred up, that I have not found access easy; and how or whether this will come to thy hand, I know not; but this I

truly say to thee, I have felt the Lamb's nature, under my sufferings from thee, whereunto I have given thee no provocation, neither for the beginning nor continuance of them; and if thou canst bring that thing to the trial of the witness of God in thy heart, that will deal truly with thee, blaming what God blames, and justifying what he justifieth. And though the Lord beholdeth, and will plead the cause of his innocent ones (who, the more helpless they are, the more they are considered and tendered by him), yet I do not desire that thou shouldst suffer, either from God or man, on my account; but that thou mightst be guided to, and preserved in, that which will be sweet rest, peace, and safety, to all that are sheltered by it, in the troublous and stormy hour; in which, the Lord will distress man, and make him feel his sin and misery.

This is the sum of what I have at present to say; who have written this, not for any by-end, but in the stirrings of true love towards thee; and from a true desire, that thou mightst feel the power of God forming in thy heart aright, and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness in thee; that thou mightest be made by him of the seed of the blessed, and inherit the blessing, and find the earthly nature consumed, and brought to nought in thee. For to [this nature] is the curse, and it must feel the curse, as God brings forth his righteous judgments in the hearts, and upon the heads of the transgressors. And, knowing there is a certain day of God's calling transgressors to account, also the terribleness of his wrath and consuming pleasure in that day, I warn thee in tenderness, and in love beseech thee, to consider thy ways, and make thy peace with him: that thou mayst not be irrecoverably and eternally miserable; but mayst be transformed by his life and nature, and sow to him the fruits thereof, that thou mayst reap, and receive of him that which is the soul's joy.

And, friend, know this assured truth; it is not a religion of man's making or choosing (neither the Pope's, nor any other man's), but only that which is of God, which is acceptable to him: and what will become of that man, whose

very religion and worship are hateful to God? Where will he stand, or what account will he be able to give, when he appears before him?

Thou hast not often met with such plain dealing as this. These things very nearly concern thee. Oh! wait upon God for his true light, that thou mayest not be deceived about them; because thy loss thereby will be so great and irreparable.

I am thy Friend in these things, and have written as a true lover and desirer of the welfare of thy soul.

I. P.

From Aylesbury Jail,
24th of Sixth Month, 1666.

To ——— ———.

FRIEND,

Thy advantage in thy travels is great over what it hath been; the Lord having given thee a better sight both of thy enemies, and of that wherein his strength against them is revealed.

Now, what remains but that thou hope in him, and breathe unto him, and hang upon him; that his virtue may flow into thee, and the mountains and difficulties may pass away, before the presence of the Seed, who is revealed in thee? Look down no more, look out no more; but dwell with thy Beloved, in the tent that he hath pitched for thee. Let him do what he will, let him appear how he will, wait on him in the daily exercise; stand still in the faith, and see him working out thy salvation, and scattering the bones of them that have besieged thee. Think not hardly of him, by no means; question not his carrying on of his work. He knows what yet he hath to do, and what stratagem the enemy yet hath to surprise and entangle thee. Oh feel his arm stretched out for thee! and be not so much discouraged, in the sight of what is yet to be done, as comforted in his good-will towards thee. 'Tis true, he hath chastened thee with rods and sore afflictions; but did he ever take away

his loving kindness from thee? or did his faithfulness ever fail in the sorest, blackest, thickest, darkest, night that ever befell thee? And breathe to him, for the carrying on of his work; that thou mayst feel his presence and life, getting dominion over death daily in thee, more and more. And wait to feel strength of life, that thy growth may be pure, and the holy seed may have dominion and be all in thee.

I. P.

8th of the Eighth Month, 1666.

POSTSCRIPT.

The enemy will be laying snares, and forging subtle devices to darken and bow thee down, which (thou, not being hasty to believe, join with, and let in as true, but waiting on the Lord in singleness, fear, and humility), his light will spring up in thee, and help thee to discern. And oh! how sweet will it be for thee, who hast so often been ensnared, to escape the gins and nets of the fowler, and to dwell in the rest and peace, which thy soul hath tasted of, and which is the proper place of thy habitation.

Indeed, the Lord's thoughts have not been towards thee, as thou hast apprehended all along. His anger was towards the enemy, towards the oppressor, not towards thee. Nor doth he judge and smite the mind, after that manner that the enemy doth accuse; but according to his own nature, sweetness, and tender love. And his judgments and smitings have other effects, than the serpent's accusings and piercings; for *they* do not drive *from* him, but they melt, and tender and prepare the heart for union with him. Oh! keep close to the measure of life, wherein thou mayst discern and distinguish these things; and take heed of letting in one bowing-down thought (how manifest or demonstrative soever), but look up to him who hath freely loved, and hath abounded in mercy towards thee; that in the faith, patience, stillness, and meekness of his seed, thou mayst be found always waiting upon him, in the several exercises, wherewith he shall daily see good to exercise thee; till he

bring forth his seed in dominion in thee, and thereby give thee thy desired and expected end.

I. P.

9th of the Eighth Month, 1666.

To ——— ———.

FRIEND,

The vessel, or created nature, poisoned by sin and death, nothing can redeem, but the life and power of God revealed in the vessel. This life, this peace, this power, this righteousness, this salvation, is the Lord Jesus Christ. And he that feels any thing of this, feels somewhat of Christ; and being joined to, and partaking of it, partakes somewhat of his redemption: for it is not by an outward knowledge, but by an inward virtue, and spiritual life, received from Christ, and held in Christ, that those who are saved, are saved. This is the thing of value with me, for which I have been made willing to part with all, and into this purchased possession am I daily travelling; and in my travels, the Father of life and tender mercy pleaseth to help me.

Now, to have thee gathered into this light, this life, this power, which is of Christ, and in which he is, and appears, is the desire of my soul, in uprightness of heart before the Lord, for thee: and if he please, I am willing to be instrumental in his hand, towards the bringing forth of this in thee. It is not my desire to bring forth new notions in thee; but rather that thou mightst wait on the Lord, for him to bring up his living, powerful truth in thee, wherein the knowledge of the new and living way is alone revealed.

I am a worm, I am poor, I am nothing; less than nothing, as in myself; weaker than I can express, or thou imagine; yet, in the midst of all this, the life, power, righteousness, and presence of Christ is my refreshment, peace, joy and crown: and that, to which I invite thee, is substance, everlasting substance, which thou shalt know and acknowledge in spirit to be so, as that is created and raised in thee, which can see and acknowledge it in truth. Oh! wait on the Lord,

fear before him, pray for his fear, in the upright breathings (which are not of thy spirit's forming, but of his pure begetting); that thou mayst be led by him out of that wisdom which entangles, into that innocency, simplicity, and precious childishness, in which the Father appears to the soul, to break the bonds and snares of iniquity; for hereby the evil spirit not only involveth in iniquity, but also begets a belief, as if there could be no perfect redemption therefrom, till the time of redemption be over.

Thy truly loving Friend, desiring the right guidance and happiness of thy soul, by the Lord Jesus Christ, the alone skilful Shepherd and Guide, even as of my own soul.

I. P.

Aylesbury Prison,
20th of Tenth Month, 1666.

To Friends of Truth in and about the two Chalfonts.*

As a father watcheth over his children, so do I wait, and desire to feel the Lord watching over my soul continually. And in his love, care, wise and tender counsel, is my safety, life, and peace; and I never yet repented either waiting for him or hearkening to him. But if I have hearkened, at any time, to any thing else, and mistaken his voice, and entertained the enemy's deceitful appearance, instead of his pure truth (which it is very easy to do), that grievous mistake hath proved matter of loss and sorrow to my soul.

Now, O my Friends, that ye might know and hear the voice of the Preserver! so shall ye be preserved, and kept from the voice of the stranger, which draweth aside from the pure principle of life, and the true, feeling sense. There is that near you which watcheth to betray: oh! the God of my life, joy, peace, and hope, watch over your souls, and deliver you from the advantages, which, at any time, it hath against any of you. The seed which God hath sown in you

*I. P. and his wife appear to have been instrumental in gathering the Friends of that neighborhood to the knowledge of the truth, as held by the Society.

is pure and precious. Oh that it may be found living in you, and ye abiding in it! Oh that no other seed may, at any time, usurp authority over it! but that ye may know the authority and pure truth which is of God, and therein stand, in the pure dominion, over all that is against him. For, in the principle of life, which ye have known and received in measure, is dominion; and ye, therein preserved, are in the dominion over the impure and deceitful one; and that judging in you, hath power to judge all impurity and deceivableness, as the light thereof pleaseth to make it manifest to you; but out of that, ye will easily become a prey, and set up darkness for light, and account light darkness; and then a wrong wisdom, confidence, and conceitedness will get up in you, and lead you far out of the way and spirit of truth. Oh, my dear Friends, that that may be kept down in you which is forward to judge, to approve or disapprove! and may the weighty judgment of the seed be waited for! And, oh! do not judge, do not judge, before the light of the day shine in you, and give forth the judgment; but stand and walk in fear and humility, and tenderness of spirit, and silence of flesh, that the Lord be not provoked against any of you, to give you up to a wrong sense and judgment, to the hurt of your souls. And mind your own states, and the feeling of life in your own vessels; which will keep you pure, precious, and chaste in the eye of the Lord. And oh! do not meddle with talking about others, which eats out the inward life, and may exalt your spirits out of your place, and above your proper growth: be as the weaned child, simple, naked, meek, humble, tender; easily led by, and subjected to, the Father; so will ye grow in that which is of God, and be preserved out of that which hunteth after the pure life, to betray and destroy it. I have an interest in you; my cries are to the Lord for you, and I exceedingly thirst after your preservation and growth in that which is pure; and in that breathing, longing spirit towards you was it in my heart at this time to write unto you.

The Lord God of my mercies, hope, and life, watch over you for good, and keep your hearts in the pure and single

watch; that the enemy, by any subtle device of his, break not in upon you; nor ye, by any temptation, be allured or drawn from the Lord; but may know the pure, eternal, everlasting habitation, and may dwell and abide therein, to the joy of your own souls, and the rejoicing of the hearts of all that have travailed for you in the spirit of the Lord.

From your brother and companion in the faith, patience, and afflictions of the seed,

I. P.

Aylesbury Prison,
25th of Eleventh Month, 1666.

POSTSCRIPT.

Thus, feel after that which hath gathered you to the Lord; and then also, in that, ye will feel the life, freshness, and glory in the Lord, of those who have been made instrumental to gather you, and are still serviceable in his hand and leadings, to build you up; and then that which is ready to hearken to and receive prejudices, will be kept down, and the pure life will live over it, which he that feels has joy and peace and rest in God.

And Friends, you that are weak, bless God for the strong; you that have need of a pillar to lean upon bless God, that hath provided pillars in his house; and, in fear and the guidance of his Spirit, make use of these pillars; who are faithful, and have ability from God, in his power and glorious presence with them, to help to sustain his building, even as they had ability from the Lord to gather unto him. He that despiseth him that is sent, despiseth Him that sent him; and he that undervalues any gift, office, or work, that God hath bestowed upon any person, despiseth the wisdom and disposal of the Giver. Are all fathers? Have all overcome the enemy? Are all grown up in the life? Are all stars in the firmament of God's power? Hath God made all equal? Are there not different states, different degrees, different growths, different places, &c.? Then, if God hath made a difference, and given degrees of life, and gifts different, according to his pleasure; what wisdom and spirit

is that which doth not acknowledge this, but would make all equal? O my Friends! fear before the Lord; honor the Lord in his appearances, and in the differences which he hath made among the children of men, and among his people. He gave prophets of old, and the rest of the people were not equal with them. He gave evangelists, apostles, pastors, teachers, &c., and the other members of the churches were not equal with them. He hath given fathers and elders now, and the babes and young men are not equal with them. Thus it is, in truth, from the Lord; and that which is of God in you, will so acknowledge it.

Therefore watch, every one, to feel and know his own place and service in the body, and to be sensible of the gifts, places, and services of others; that the Lord may be honored in all, and every one owned and honored in the Lord, and no otherwise.

I. P.

26th of the Eleventh Month, 1666

TO THE SINGLE, UPRIGHT-HEARTED, AND FAITHFUL FRIENDS OF TRUTH, IN AND ABOUT THE TWO CHALFONTS.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Have ye in any measure drunk in the sense of what the Lord hath done for you? and have ye felt meltings of spirit, and bowings before him, with praises to his name therefor? Indeed, my request is to the Lord for you, that he would please to keep you truly sensible of what he already is to you, and of what he hath already done for you; that he would also, of his tender mercy and great goodness, visit you yet further, increase life in you, cause faith to abound, give you to dwell in his power, and always abide in his seed, and feel that to be your hope, peace, joy, life, and strength continually; that ye may more and more give thanks unto him, as ye feel his pure life arising in you, and death and the grave swallowed up thereby.

Ah! my friends, can we ever forget the lost and miserable estate, wherein the mercy of the Lord and his power

from on high visited us? Oh, the blackness of that day, the misery, the deep distress of that day, which some of your souls felt! Did ye not know what it was to want God, and to lie open to the furious assaults of the enemy; when ye felt no strength, nor knew whither to retire, to keep out any hurt, any temptation, any vain thought and imagination, or to give you any grounded hope in the goodness and mercy of the Lord? How did ye mourn? how did ye cry out and pine away in your iniquities day and night! and knew not which way to look, nor what to wait for! Are there not among you, who have known this state, and felt somewhat of that which I now relate? Sure I am, there are upon the earth, who can witness it to the full, whose mouths and hearts are now filled with a sense of the Lord's goodness, and of his great salvation, and with deep and high praises to his name.

But, my dear friends, is there any of you (I know to whom I speak, even to the sensible, to the diligent, to the faithful among you), who cannot in truth witness as in God's presence, concerning the arm and power of his salvation, which ye have often felt? insomuch that ye can sing that song, "He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets." Do ye not know the house of his servant David, with the horn of salvation in it, and that horn raised up to you for your defence and comfort? Yea, do ye not daily feel the Lord ministering out salvation to you from it? Are not your enemies daily overcome by the faith, which he hath given you in his power? May I not say to you, where is the strength of the tempter? Have ye not felt the seed of the woman to bruise the head of the serpent? so that, in the fear of the Lord, and in the strength, virtue, and dominion of his life manifested in you, ye can say, though as yet somewhat tremblingly, Where are those temptations, those lusts, vain thoughts, and imaginations, which once I was overcome by and overrun with? Surely, I may speak thus; for I know assuredly, that the power of the Lord God, as it is lifted up in any of

you, scatters these, and gives you dominion over them. For the life and its power are given as a bulwark and weapon of war against iniquity and its power; and, where it is received, it opposeth, warreth, striveth, until it overcome.

And, this is that which gives the victory and overcoming; to wit, faith in the seed. The seed felt, the soul joined to it, faith in it and from it given to the soul. Then it becomes the Leader, the mighty undertaker for the soul, and overcomes its snares and enemies for it; and, when it hath overcome them, they are overcome indeed. And then the soul lies down in peace, dwells in peace, feeds on the living nourishment, in the green pastures of life, in peace. Then Jerusalem, the building or life in the heart, becomes a quiet habitation, where God and the soul dwell sweetly together; and there is nothing that hath power in it to disturb, annoy, or make afraid. Why so? Because the Lord God of power is present there, stretcheth out his wings there, is a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night there! He hath raised up his glorious life in that heart, whereof he is very choice; and he hath also spread a defence over his glory, with which the soul is so encompassed and defended, that it feels the walls of this city to be salvation, and its gates praise.

O my soul, travel on! O dear Friends! do ye also travel on, into the fulness of the glory of this state. There is no other thing to be desired and waited for. This is your portion, both here in this world, and for ever. Therefore wait in the seed of *this* life; wait to feel yet a further gathering into it, and a growing up in it; and give yourselves up to it, that it may overspread and cover you. And the Lord God of life daily open it, and manifest it more and more in you and to you; that ye may be more found in him, and yet more acceptable and pleasing in the eyes of your God; and may sing praises unto him, not only at the foot of the hill, in some true proportion and measure of his life, but in the very heights of Sion, even in the fulness of the measure of your stature in Christ; which ye are all diligently to press after, till ye arrive at. And then there is no more to

be done, but to spread abroad into, and drink in of, and live in, the full pleasure and safety of life for ever! Then may ye eat freely of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, and draw water, with joy, out of the wells of salvation!

Therefore feel, oh! feel, in spirit, the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and be daily looking up to that, which quickens to God, and keeps fresh and lively in him; that none of you grow slothful, drowsy, or negligent, and so, unfaithful in relation to the great talent which God hath put into your hands; and so the Lord be provoked against you, and suffer the enemy to tempt and prevail upon you; that a veil come over your hearts again, and the air thicken, and the earthly nature cover the seed; and he, that hath power in that earth, and over that air, captivate, oppress, entangle, and lead you back from God again. Oh! cry to the Lord to keep the eye open, and the heart single, and the soul in the true sense and feeling; that the heavenly voice, which drew you out of the earth, may be daily heard further instructing you, and gathering you more and more up into him, who is your life. So ye that fear the Lord, and love his name, and have tasted of his goodness and powerful salvation, oh hate evil! All that his light hath made manifest, and drawn you from, oh take heed of ever dallying with again! Oh never hearken to the tempter! but pray to the Father, that ye may discern his baits, and at no time consult or reason with him; but still wait, in every thing, to feel the motion, guidance, quickening, and sweet, pure, heavenly leading of the spirit of your Father!

Hath the Lord spoken peace to you, peace which passeth man's understanding, and only flows from him? hath he given you any proportion of this precious peace? Oh! may he watch over you, and preserve you in that wisdom, in those heavenly instructions, in that heavenly life, divine power, and holy conversation, wherein ye met with that peace, and wherein alone ye can enjoy and possess it! and keep you out of all manner of sin, lust, and foolishness of the fleshly mind and spirit; for the peace is not there. That

is the fruit of the enemy to your peace, and it hath of his nature in it; it always breaks your peace, and sows distance, difference, and division, between the Giver and Maker of your peace and you. Do ye not always (ye that are in the true sense, and have received the holy understanding) feel it thus, and know it to be thus? it is an eternal truth, and the eternal eye, wherever it is opened, witnesseth and sealeth to it. Therefore this little thing, this light of God in you, to which ye were at first directed and turned, which discovers all the darkness of the enemy, and all his deceits and devices, and keeps the minds of those that are staid by it,—in this wait, to this let your minds be still turned, and in it still abide; and the power and glory of eternal life will daily, more and more, appear in you, yea, flow and break in upon you; to the filling of your vessels with its virtue, and the causing of your hearts to abound with joy before the Lord, and with thanksgivings to him.

May the God of tender mercies and everlasting compassions cause the bowels of his love to be daily yearning towards you; that you may be nursed up with the living food, and that that which would overturn and destroy his work may be opposed; that ye may feel it daily go on, yea, mightily preserved and carried on by him, even till it be finished, and the top stone laid; and your souls, in the true and full sense of life, cry, *Grace, grace*, to Him that laid the foundation, raised up, defended, and carried on the building, and now, at length, hath perfected it. And thus, whatsoever ye have hitherto witnessed in measure, ye shall then witness in fulness; and see that all the promises of God are of a precious nature, and are "yea and amen" from God to the seed.

May the life, presence, and power of the Lord be with you in this seed; in your breathings after it, in your joinings to it, in your abidings and waitings upon him in it; and the Lord God give you to breathe after it, give you to join to it, give you to abide always, and wait upon him in it, and never to hearken to, and go out after, a contrary spirit and wisdom; but keep you in the simplicity, lowli-

ness, humility, and tender spirit which is in Christ Jesus, to the praise of his own name, and preservation and joy of your hearts before him for ever, amen!

Written in the tender bowels and motion of the pure life, from the place of my confinement in Aylesbury.

I. P.

1st of Third Month, 1667.

To Friends in Amersham.

Friends,

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand, if there has been any slip or fall; and waiting till the Lord gives sense and repentance, if sense and repentance in any be wanting. Oh! wait to feel this spirit, and to be guided to walk in this spirit, that ye may enjoy the Lord in sweetness, and walk sweetly, meekly, tenderly, peaceably, and lovingly one with another. And then, ye will be a praise to the Lord; and any thing that is, or hath been, or may be, amiss, ye will come over in the true dominion, even in the Lamb's dominion; and that which is contrary shall be trampled upon, as life rises and rules in you. So watch your hearts and ways; and watch one over another, in that which is gentle and tender, and knows it can neither preserve itself, nor help another out of the snare; but the Lord must be waited upon, to do this in and for us all. So mind Truth, the service, enjoyment, and possession of it in your hearts; and so to walk, as ye may bring no disgrace upon it, but may be a good savor in the places where ye live, the meek, innocent, tender, righteous life reigning in you, governing over you, and shining through you, in the eyes of all with whom ye converse.

Your Friend in the Truth, and a desirer of your welfare and prosperity therein.

I. P.

Aylesbury, 4th of Third Month, 1667.

FOR MY DEAR FRIENDS, BRETHREN, AND SISTERS IN THE TRUTH, IN AND ABOUT THE TWO CHALFONTS.

FRIENDS,

The Lord will wonderfully teach his people, and wonderfully help them! he will pour of his life and virtue into them, and cause his strength to appear in them, and break forth through them, to the glorifying of his name, and making glad the hearts of those that have breathed after him, and waited for him. Therefore, let us lift up our heads, and "fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days?" And let us wait to be made able by him to receive of his riches, and drink in of his fulness, that we may become rich and full in him, and kept empty and poor in ourselves; that the more the life ariseth in us, the more we may feel our own nothingness, and be to the praise of the riches of his grace and mercy, wherein and whereby he hath made us accepted in his Beloved.

And dear Friends, mind the principle, mind the root, into which the Lord hath ingrafted us; that we may abide and grow up therein, and daily find and feel the sap thereof springing up in us, and quickening us more and more to God. Ye know how ye entered; even so, ye must abide and grow up, even in the light, in the life, in the power, which gathered, preserveth, and causeth to flourish. So my dear Friends, let us all dwell in our everlasting habitation, and no more go forth, but sink into the kingdom, and wait to feel the dominion, righteousness, holiness, power, and purity thereof, daily revealed more and more in our hearts. For there is no other root or spring of life, than that into which the Lord hath gathered us, no other true life and power in any vessel upon the earth, besides that which springs therefrom. Therefore feel, oh! feel that which establisheth, and that wherein the establishment is, and your union, life, and strength therein; that ye may not be bowed down or overborne by whatever happens, either from within or without; but may feel and enjoy the rest and

peace of your souls, in that which is over all, and orders all to the good of those who fear him, and in uprightness of heart wait upon him!

L. P.

Aylesbury Jail,
23rd of Fourth Month, 1667.

To the Friends at Chalfont, in Buckinghamshire.

O Friends!

Feed on the tree of life; feed on the measure of life, and the pure power thereof, which God hath revealed, and manifesteth in you. Do ye know your food, do ye remember the taste and relish of it? Then keep to it, and do not meddle with that which seemeth very desirable to the other eye, and very able to make wise. Oh abide in the simplicity that is in Christ, in the naked truth that ye have felt there! and there, ye will be able to know and distinguish your food, which hath several names in Scripture, but is all one and the same thing:—the bread, the milk, the water, the wine, the flesh and blood of Him that came down from heaven, John vi. 51, &c.—it is the same, only it is given forth weaker and stronger, according to the capacity of him that receiveth it; and so hath different names given to it accordingly.

Oh! keep out of that wisdom, which knoweth not the thing; for that is it, which also stumbles about the names. But keep to the principle of life, keep to the seed of the kingdom, feed on that which was from the beginning. Is not this meat indeed, and drink indeed! flesh indeed, and blood indeed! The Lord hath advanced you to that ministration of life and power, wherein things are known above and beyond names; wherein the life is revealed and felt, beyond what words can utter. Oh! dwell in your habitations; and feed on the food which God brings you into your habitations; which is pure, living, spiritual, and will cause your souls and spirits more and more to live in and to God, as ye eat and drink thereof. So be not shaken or disquieted

by the wisdom of the flesh; but feel that which settleth and establisheth in the pure power.

And the Lord God preserve you, and give you to watch against, and to feel victory and dominion over, all that is contrary to Him in any of you; and which stands in the way of your fellowship with Him, and of your joy and peace in Him.

This sprang unto you in the good will of your Father, from the life and love of your brother in the Truth,

I. P.

Aylesbury Jail,
8th of Fifth Month, 1667.

To George Fox.

Dear G. F.,

I feel the tender mercy of the Lord, and some portion of that brokenness, fear, and humility which I have long waited for, and breathed after. I feel unity with, and strength from, the body: oh! blessed be the Lord, who hath fitted and restored me, and brought up my life from the grave. I feel a high esteem and dear love to thee, whom the Lord hath chosen, anointed, and honored, and of thy brethren and fellow-laborers in the work of the Lord.

And, dear George Fox, I beg thy love, I entreat thy prayers, in faith and assurance that the Lord hears thee, that I may be yet more broken, that I may be yet more filled with the fear of the Lord, that I may be yet poorer and humbler before the Lord, and may walk in perfect humility and tenderness of spirit before him, all my days.

Dear George Fox, thou mayest feel my desires and wants more fully than my own heart. Be helpful to me in tender love, that I may feel settlement and stability in the truth; and perfect separation from, and dominion in the Lord over, all that is contrary thereto.

I. P.

Aylesbury Jail,
15th of Fifth Month, 1667.

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down from heaven into the vessel, from all other things, by its daily feeding on it, and converse with it in spirit. What heart can conceive the righteousness, the holiness, the peace, the joy, the strength of life, that is felt here!

For, Friends, there is no straitness in the Fountain. God is fulness: and it is his delight to empty himself into the hearts of his children; and he doth empty himself, according as he makes way in them, and as they are able to drink in of his living virtue. Therefore, where the soul is enlarged, where the senses are grown strong, where the mouth is opened wide (the Lord God standing ready to pour out of his riches), what should hinder it from being filled? And being filled, how natural is it to run over, and break forth inwardly in admiration and deep sense of spirit, concerning what it cannot utter! saying, oh the fulness, oh the depth, height, breadth, and length of the love! Oh the compassion, the mercy, the tenderness, of our Father! How hath he pitied, how hath he pardoned, beyond what the heart could believe! how hath he helped in the hour of distress! how hath he conquered and scattered the enemies! which, in the unbelief, the heart was ready often to say, were unconquerable, and that it should one day die, by the hand of one or other of its mighty enemies, lusts, and corruptions. How hath he put an end to doubts, fears, disputes, troubles, wherewith the mind was overwhelmed and tossed! and now he extends peace like a river; now he puts the soul forth out of the pit, into the green pastures; now it feeds on the freshness of life, and is satisfied, and drinks of the river of God's pleasure, and is delighted! and sings praise to the Lamb, and Him that sits on the throne, saying, Glory, glory! life, power, dominion, and majesty, over all the powers of darkness, over all the enemies of the soul, be to thy name for evermore!

Now, my dear Friends, ye know somewhat of this, and ye know the way to it. Oh be faithful, be faithful! travel on, travel on! let nothing stop you, but wait for, and daily follow, the sensible leadings of that measure of life which God hath placed in you, which is one with the fulness, and

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Aylesbury Jail,
2nd & 3rd of Sixth Month, 1667.

POST

Friends,

Be not discouraged becau
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scendings of the power upon you; abide in faith of the Lord's help, and wait in patience till the Lord arise; and see if his arm do not scatter what yours could not. So be still before him, and, in stillness, believe in his name; yea, enter not into the hurryings of the enemy, though they fill the soul; for there is yet somewhat to which they cannot enter, from whence patience, faith, and hope will spring up in you, even in the midst of all that they can do.

Therefore into *this* sink; in *this* lie hid in the evil hour; and the temptations will pass away, and the tempter's strength be broken, and the arm of the Lord, which brake him, be revealed; and then ye shall see, that he raised but a sea of trouble to your souls, to sink himself by; and the Lord will throw the horse and his rider, which trampled upon and rode over the Just in you, into that sea; and ye shall stand upon the bank, and sing the song of Moses to Him that drowned him, and delivered you from him! and, in due season, ye shall sing the song of the Lamb also, when his life springs up in you in his pure dominion; triumphing over death, and all that is contrary to God, both within and without.

Now, Friends, in a sensible waiting and giving up to the Lord, in the daily exercise, by the daily cross to that in you which is not of the life, this work will daily go on; and ye will feel from the Lord, that which will help, relieve, refresh, and satisfy, which neither tongue nor words can utter. And may the Lord God breathe upon you, preserve and fill you with his life and holy Spirit, to the growth and rejoicing of your souls in Him, who is our blessed Father, and merciful Redeemer,—in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head and King for ever and for evermore!

And then, as to what may befall us outwardly, in this confused state of things, shall we not trust our tender Father, and rest satisfied in his will? Are we not engraven in his heart, and on the palms of his hands? and can he forget us in any thing he doth? Shall any thing hurt us? Shall any thing come between us and our life, between us and his love, and tender care over us? What though

the fig-tree should not blossom, neither there be any fruit in the vine; what though the labor of the olive should fail, and the fields yield no meat; what though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls; may we not for all this rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation? And what though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; what though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; is there not a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God? Is not the joy, the virtue, the life, the sweet refreshment thereof, felt in the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High? And he that provides inward food for the inward man, inward clothing, inward refreshment; shall he not provide also sufficient for the outward? Yea, shall he not bear up the mind, and be our strength, portion, armor, rock, peace joy, and full satisfaction in every condition? For it is not the condition makes miserable, but the want of him in the condition: he is the substance of all, the virtue of all, the life of all, the power of all; he nourisheth, he preserveth, he upholdeth, with the creatures, or without the creatures, as it pleaseth him: and he that hath him, he that is with him, he that is in him, cannot want. Hath the spirit of this world content in all that it enjoys? No: it is restless, it is unsatisfied. But can tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword come between the love of the Father to the child, or the child's rest, content, and delight in his love? And doth not the love, the peace, the joy, the rest felt, swallow up all the bitterness and sorrow of the outward condition?

The seed, the godliness, the uprightness, the true nature and birth, hath not only the promise of eternal life; but also whatever is necessary for the vessel, wherein it dwells, in this life too. So dwell in that to which is the promise, and live upon the promise: yea, live upon that which cannot miss of the promise, but feels the presence and power of the Father, in all and over all. The just lives by his faith; and he that is in union with the just, lives by the faith of the

just, and takes no more care than the lilies, but leaves the care of all to him, to whom it properly belongs, and who hath taken it upon him; who nourishes, clothes, preserves, and causes the lilies of the field to grow and flourish in beauty and glory: and shall he not much more clothe, nourish, and take care of his own lilies, the heavenly lilies, the lilies of his garden?

Let us then not look out like the world, or judge or fear according to the appearance of things, after the manner of the world; but let us sanctify the Lord of hosts in our hearts, and let him be our fear and dread; and he shall be an hiding place unto us in the storms, and in the tempests, which are coming thick upon the earth.

Thus, my dear friends, let us retire, and dwell in the peace which God breathes, and lie down in the Lamb's patience and stillness, night and day, which nothing can wear out or disturb: and so the preservation of the poor and needy shall be felt to be in his name; and glory shall be sung to his name over all, which is a strong tower, a mighty, impregnable rock of defence against all assaults and dangers whatsoever; which they that have trusted therein have already experienced it to be; and they that continue trusting therein, shall always experience it so to be, in all trials and dangers, whatever may happen, of what kind soever, even to the end. Amen.

To ——— ———.

Dear Friend,

Thou hast had the path of salvation faithfully testified of to thee, and hast come to a sense of the thing; even to the feeling of *that*, whereby the Father begets life, and manifesteth his love and peace in and to the soul. Now, what remains? but that thou look up to the Lord, to guide thy feet in this path, and to preserve from that which darkens and leads out of the way; that thou mayst pass on thy journey safely, and come to the inheritance and enjoyment of that which thy soul longeth after.

There is life, there is peace, there is joy, there is righteousness, there is health, there is salvation, there is power of redemption, in the seed: yea, there is so. But thy soul wants, and doth not enjoy these things. Well, but how mayst thou come to enjoy them? There is no way, but union with the seed; knowing the seed, hearing the voice of the seed, learning of, and becoming subject to, the seed. "Learn of me, take my yoke upon you," saith Christ, "and ye shall find rest to your souls." Wouldst thou feel thy soul's rest in Christ? Thou must know the seed's voice, hear it, learn daily of him, become his disciple; take up, from *his* nature, what is contrary to *thy* nature. And then, as thy nature is worn out, and his nature comes up in thee, thou wilt find all easy; all that is of life easy, and transgression hard, unbelief hard: yea, thou wilt find it very hard and unnatural, when the nature of the seed is grown up in thee, either to distrust the Lord or hearken to his enemy. And then thou wilt change that dwelling-place (into which Satan brings dark thoughts, suggestions, and reasonings) for the dwelling-place which is from above, which is the habitation of the righteous; wherein there is light, life, peace, satisfaction, health, salvation, and rejoicing of soul from and before the Lord.

Now, do not say, Who shall do thus for me? but know, the arm of the Lord is mighty, and brings mighty things to pass; and that arm hath been revealed in thee, and is at work for thee. Oh that thou couldst trust it! (why canst thou not! hath it not sown a seed of faith in thee?) and come into and abide in the path, wherein its mighty, powerful operations are felt and made manifest! And, oh that thou mayst find ability, to watch against that which bows down, and not so let in, as thou hast done exceedingly, to the grievous wounding and distressing of thy soul! For the enemy's dark suggestions work according to their nature; and if thou let them lie upon thee, how can they but darken, afflict, and perplex thee?

Therefore, in the evil hour, fly from all things that thus arise in thee; and lie still, feel thy stay, till his light, which

"makes manifest," arise in thee, and clear up things to thee. And think not the time of darkness long, but watch, that thy heart be kept empty, and thy mind clear of thoughts and belief of things, till He bring in somewhat, which thou mayst safely receive. Therefore, say to thy thoughts, and to thy belief of things (according to the representation of the dark power, in the time of thy darkness), "Get thee hence!" And if that will not do, look up to the Lord to speak to them; and to keep them out, if they be not already entered, or to thrust them out if they be already got in. And if he do not so presently, or for a long time, yet do not murmur or think much, but wait till he do. Yea, though they violently thrust themselves upon thee, and seem to have entered thy mind, yet let them be as strangers to thee; receive them not, believe them not, know them not, own them not; and thy bosom will, notwithstanding, be chaste in the eye of the Lord, though they may seem to thee to have defiled thee.

Look up to the Father, that thou mayest learn this of him: and, becoming faithful to him therein, thou wilt find thy darkness abate, and its strength more and more broken in thee; and thou wilt not only feel and taste a little, now and then, but also come to possess and inherit, and rejoice before the Lord in thy portion.

Thy Friend in the truth, which changeth not, but is pure, and preserveth pure for ever.

I. P.

From Aylesbury Jail,
28th of Seventh Month, 1667.

To his Brother.

Dear Brother,

This morning, as I was going out to walk, somewhat sprang up in my heart freshly and livingly to thee; whereupon, I consulted not, but immediately turned back so to do. Now, if the Lord make it useful to thee, thou wilt have cause to bless his name; and so shall I also, who heartily desire the

life and welfare of thy soul in the living God, and thy avoiding all such snares as the enemy lays to betray, and to keep it in death and bondage. The thing that rose up in me, was this.

God gave some apostles, some prophets, &c., for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body, for the perfecting of the saints. This was God's gift, in mercy and love, to them in that day, of which gift they were to walk worthy, and to be thankful for it.

And in these days, the Lord hath given gifts to some for this work, which the body hath need of; and the body is to wait on the Lord in the use of his gift, in fear and humility. For those that gather the soul to the Lord, they also are appointed to watch over the soul, in the same power and authority that gathered. Now, that which is of God in any heart, being heeded, will teach to make use of the gift and ministry which is of him; and it cannot be despised, but God is despised; nor can it be neglected, without loss and danger to the soul that neglects it. For God is wise, and his ordinances, his ministry, his gifts, are weighty, and his blessings go along with them. Who have been gathered to him in these days, but by his ministry which he hath appointed and sent to gather? and who have been preserved, but those who have waited on the Lord, and been subject to his Spirit in the same ministry which hath gathered? Mark, brother, in every age, God's ministers have been despised. Moses and all the prophets were despised in their day. What! [said the despisers] hath God spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? The apostles were despised in their days, by those that kept not to the anointing; for this always teacheth to reverence, in subjection to the Lord, the ministry which is of the anointing. "He that despiseth you," said Christ, "despiseth me." He that despiseth them in their gathering, or in their building up, despiseth Him that sent them. They were earthen vessels, in presence contemptible, and very liable to be despised. It is easy still, to despise God's messengers and servants; but he that will truly and rightly esteem them, must lie low, must dwell in

the pure fear, and in the sense of life, that he may be taught of God so to do. It is an easy matter to have objections enough against them; but to see through all prejudices and objections, to the pure and precious life in them, and to the gift and spirit and power of the Lord, wherein and whereby they minister,—this requires a true eye, and a heart opened by the Lord.

Ah brother! this is a snare, wherein many have been caught in former ages, and in this age also, which it is easy falling into, but the preservation out of it, is not easy, but only by the power and mercy of the Lord. And blessed are those, whom the Lord so favors as to preserve out of it, and to remove from them those prejudices and devices, whereby they are entangled. Dear brother! when I am in the pure sense before the Lord, and my spirit opened by him, and *thou* presented before me; I could even beg most earnestly of the Lord, that he would open thy eye, and give thee a true sight of thy state, and cause thy spirit to bow before him; and to know and honor what is of him, and not, by any device of the enemy, be hindered from receiving therefrom, what he, in tender love and mercy, holds out to thee.

And, dear brother, mind this advice which just springs in my heart: pick out some of the faithful ones of the Lord's servants, and open thy heart to them, as, in the leadings of the Lord and waiting upon him, thou findest freedom thereunto. Indeed, brother, I have had, for a long time, a deep sense of danger towards thee: the Lord prevent it, that thy soul may live to him, and not die from him! There is a wisdom, a will near thee, which will destroy thee, unless the Lord destroy it in thee.

Oh that thou mightst come to wait aright for the motion of his spirit! and mightst be kept by him in that which knows the drawing; then wilt thou hunger and thirst after the righteousness of his kingdom, and long after times of meeting and assembling with his people; and find thy sense of them living, and thy life refreshed therein. For, God is with his people, of a truth, and they meet not without him;

but his presence is in the midst of them, causing his life to flow into every vessel, that stands open to him. And death has not come over his people, whatever the enemy suggests, where he gets an ear open: but life grows more and more in freshness and into dominion in them. O brother! the Lord fully gather thee into and preserve thee in that, wherein thou mayst feel this in *thy own* particular, wherein thou mayst feel the freshness of life, and the power thereof in *them;* that *thy* heart also, may be as a watered garden, and as a living temple, wherein the pure, living God dwells!

I am satisfied in my heart, that not only my love, but my life speaks to thee. Oh that thou couldst hear, and feel, and fear, and bow down before the Lord! that he might, in his due season, raise thee up in his life and power among his people, purifying thee, and preserving thee pure and living to him for ever.

POSTSCRIPT.

Dear Brother,

The desire of my heart to the Lord for thee is, that he would open and keep open in thee the eye which sees, and the ear which hears, and the heart which understands his truth; and that he would prevent the enemy from raising up another thing in thee, instead of the seed of life and holy witness.

Great hath been the subtlety, and deep hath been the error from the truth; and many who seem to be Jews are not, but have erred from the Spirit, life, and power, wherewith they were at first convinced, and whereby they were at first led. And in these, the enemy hath raised up a seat of prejudices, and strong-holds against the ministry and power of the living God; but those that are of the right seed bless the Lord, beholding his work, while others slight it, and are expecting somewhat else; they bless also the church which the Lord hath built, and the ministry which he hath sent forth to gather and build it.

O brother! there is a high-mindedness in *some* which takes

upon it to judge beyond its growth and capacity; and there is a fear in the hearts of *others*, lest any thing in them should get up, or judge, or be any thing, beyond or beside the pure Truth; *this* teacheth to honor and prefer those, whom the Lord hath preferred, *the other* hath accusations and pleas against them; *the one* of these witnesseth preservation from God, *the other* is left to fall. Dear brother, believe a traveller in the path of life (the Lord God raise up in thee that which can believe), the enemy, with great subtlety, hath laid his snares, hath taken many in his snares, even in the snares which he laid by his instrument, J—— P——; and many did let in his spirit before they were aware, and are at this day (unknown to their own hearts) entangled therein. The Lord God will terribly appear against such (indeed it is truth), unless they bow to his light, acknowledge their error from the truth, and come back to the body by repentance, and turning from that, wherein this spirit hath entangled them.

Dear brother, it is my desire that thou mayst not perish, but feel the carrying on of the work of salvation in thee; travel on in the pure, holy, living, powerful path, and receive the crown of fidelity to the truth! Ah brother! mourn to the Lord; fear before him; converse and consult with those that abide faithful; and they may help thee to see (through the guidance, presence, and power of the Spirit of the Lord with them), what of thyself, thou art not able to see. Remember this counsel; thy life is wrapped up in it; for thou hast need of the helps, which the Lord, in his tender mercy, hath provided, and canst not be safe without them.

Thy dear Brother, in the unity of nature, longing after perfect sense of thee, and unity with thee, in the pure life.

I. P.

Aylesbury Jail,
7th of Eighth Month, 1667.

To ——— ———.

DEAR FRIEND,

I have heard that thou hast somewhat against W. R., whereupon thou forbearest coming to meetings at his house: this thou oughtst seriously to weigh and consider; that thy path and walking herein, may be right and straight before the Lord. Is the thing, or are the things, which thou hast against him, fully so, as thou apprehendest? Hast thou seen evil in him, or to break forth from him? and hast thou considered *him* therein, and dealt with him, as if it had been thy own case? Hast thou pitied him, mourned over him, cried to the Lord for him, and in tender love and meekness of spirit, laid the thing before him? And if he hath refused to hear thee, hast thou tenderly mentioned it to others, and desired them to go with thee to him; that what is evil and offensive in him, might be more weightily and advantageously laid before him, for his humbling, and for his recovery unto that, which is a witness and strength against the evil? If thou hast proceeded thus, thou hast proceeded tenderly and orderly, according to the law of brotherly love; and God's witness in thy conscience will justify thee therein. But, if thou hast let in any hardness of spirit, or hard reasonings against him, or hard resolutions as relating to him, the witness of God will not justify thee in that.

And if, at any time hereafter, thou hast any thing against others, Oh learn, from that of God in thee, to show compassion towards them, even as the Lord has had pity on thee! And keep to his witness in thy heart. Wait to feel the seed and to keep thy dwelling therein, that thou mayst abide in the peace and rest thereof, and not depart out of thy habitation, out of the sense of Truth; for that will let in temptation upon thee, give the enemy strength against thee, and fill thy soul with anguish and perplexity.

So the Lord God of infinite tenderness renew his mercy upon thee, and keep thee in that, wherein his love, life, rest, joy, peace, and unspeakable comfort of his Holy Spirit,

(which keeps the mind out of all the snares and temptations of that which is unholy,) is felt and witnessed, by those, who are taught and enabled of him, to abide and dwell in that, into which he gathered them, and in which he hath pleased to appear unto them.

This is, in the love and tender goodness of the Lord to thee, from thy Friend in the Truth, and for the Truth's sake.

I. P.

18th of Tenth Month, 1667.

To Bridget Atley.

My Dear Friend,

If thy heart come to feel the seed of God, and to wait upon him in the measure of his life, he will be tender of thee as a father of his child, and his love will be naturally breaking forth towards thee. This is the end of all his dealings with thee, to bring thee hither, to make thee fit and capable of entering and abiding here. And he hath changed, and doth change thy spirit daily; though it be as the shooting up of the corn, whose growth cannot be discerned at present by the most observing eye, but it is very manifest afterwards that it hath grown. My heart is refreshed for thy sake, rejoicing in the Lord's goodness towards thee; and that the blackness of darkness begins to scatter from thee, though the enemy be still striving the same way to enter and distress thee again. But wait to feel the relieving measure of life, and heed not distressing thoughts, when they rise ever so strongly in thee; nay, though they have entered thee, fear them not, but *be still awhile, not believing in the power which thou feelest they have over thee*, and it will fall on a sudden.

It is good for thy spirit, and greatly to thy advantage, to be much and variously exercised by the Lord. Thou dost not know what the Lord hath already done, and what he is yet doing for thee therein. Ah! how precious it is to be poor, weak, low, empty, naked, distressed, for Christ's sake, that way may be made for the power and glory of his life

in the heart. And oh! learn daily more and more to trust him and hope in him, and not to be affrighted with any amazement, nor to be taken up with the sight of the present thing; but wait for the shutting of thy own eye upon every occasion, and for the opening of the eye of God in thee, and for the sight of things therewith, as they are from him. It is no matter what the enemy strives to do in thy heart, nor how distressed thy condition is, but what the Lord will do for thee, which is, with patience, to be waited for at his season in every condition. And though sin overtake, let not that bow down; nor let the eye open in thee, which stands poring at that: but wait for the healing through the chastisement, and know there is an Advocate, who, in that hour, hath an office of love, and a faithful heart towards thee. Yea, though thou canst not believe, yet be not dismayed thereat; thy Advocate, who undertakes thy cause, hath faith to give: only do thou sink into, or at least pant after the hidden measure of life, which is not in that which distresseth, disturbeth, and filleth thee with thoughts, fears, troubles, anguish, darkness, terrors, and the like; no, no! but in that which inclines to the patience, to the stillness, to the hope, to the waiting, to the silence before the Father: this is the same in nature, with the most refreshing and glorious-visiting life, though not the same in appearance: and if thy mind be turned to it, not minding but overlooking the other, thou wilt find some of the same virtue springing up in thy heart and soul, at least to stay thee.

In and through these things, thou wilt become deeply acquainted with the nature of God, and know the wonderful riches and virtue of his life, the mightiness of his power, and the preciousness of his love, tenderness of his mercy, and infiniteness of his wisdom, the glory also, and exactness of his righteousness, &c.: thou wilt be made large in spirit to receive and drink in abundantly of them; and the snares of the enemy will be so known to thee and discerned, the way of help so manifest and easy, that their strength will be broken, and the poor, entangled bird will fly away singing, from the nets and entanglements of the fowler; and

praises will spring up, and great love in thy heart to the Forgiver and Redeemer. Oh wait, hope, trust, look up to thy God! Look over that which stands between! Come into his mercy! Let in the faith which openeth the way of life, which will shut out the distrusting and doubting mind, and will close up the wrong eye, that letteth in reasonings and temptations, the wrong sense, and death with them.

Thus mayest thou witness, in and through thy Redeemer, the abundance of his life and peace.

I. P.

To Friends.

He that is weak and foolish among the lambs, continually ready to wander, both out of the pastures and from the fold, and thus to betray his life into the hands of the enemy; he who is continually scattering and squandering away what the Lord in mercy gathers for him, and freely bestows upon him; who, through drowsiness and carelessness, hath lost the benefit of, and forfeited the sweet and tender visitations of the Most High, and is now become dry, dead, barren, thick, earthy; O my God! let *that* soul feel the stirrings of the springs of life, and find some encouragements from thee, to hope in the free and large mercies of the Shepherd of Israel; who casteth not off his sheep because of their wanderings, because of their backslidings, because of their infirmities, because of their diseases, nay, not because of their hardness; but pursues them with his love, findeth them out, visiteth with his correcting hand according to their need, woundeth with his sword, and melteth in his fire, until he hath made them tender and pliable, and then he pours in the fresh oil of his salvation and sweetly healeth them.

O my friends and brethren in the pure life! be faithful to the Lord in returning him all the incomes of his Spirit; follow on in every drawing of his love, while any of the virtue of it lasts upon your spirits. Walk with him all the day long, and wait for him all the night season. And in case of erring from him, or sinning grievously against him, be not

discouraged; for he is a God of mercies, and delighteth in pardoning and forgiving much and very often. What tender mother can be more ready to forgive and embrace the child, that appears broken and afflicted with her sore displeasure! Yea, *He* gives brokenness, *he* melteth the heart, that he may be tender towards, and embrace it in his arms of reconciliation, and in the peace of his Spirit.

O my dear companions, and fellow-travellers in spirit towards the land of the living! *all* the motions of the life are cross to the corrupt [part], dwell [in the life], draw the yoke close about your necks, that ye may come into unity with the life, and the corrupt be worn out. Take the yoke, the cross, the contrariety of Jesus upon your spirits daily; that that may be worn out which hinders the unity, and so, ye may feel your King and Saviour exalted upon his throne in your hearts: this is your rest, peace, life, kingdom, and crown for ever.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

My Dear Friend,

* * * This then is the way of redemption; to wait to feel the appearance of the light of the Spirit in the heart; and, at its least or lowest appearance, to be turned from the darkness towards it. Oh! feel the redeeming arm in thine own heart, and know the love which stretcheth it forth, and take heed of being prejudiced against its inward visitations to thee: for there is that near thee which would darken thee, and keep the seed of life in bondage. I know there is that in thee, which pants and is not satisfied, somewhat that thirsts after the living waters. The Spirit of the Lord saith, Come, come to the fountain of eternal life; drink, and live.

O Lord my God! discover to the thirsty souls, what it is that withholds them from the living waters; that they may not labor and spend their strength in vain, in duties and ordinances invented by man, for that which may lull asleep

for the present, but can never quiet the cry of the living seed, nor ever satisfy the soul.

I know thy snare: there is a building in the earthly wisdom, a knowledge which thou holdest in the comprehension, out of the living feeling of that light, from which the true knowledge springs, and in which alone it is held. Thou must know the razing of this building, the confounding and scattering of this knowledge; that the true heir of the true knowledge may spring, and thou mayst feel the babe raised, to whom God reveals the mysteries of his kingdom; which he hides from the wise professors and teachers in this age, as he hath done in all ages. Thou art very wise; but thou must sell all that, and become a very fool, if thou wilt have the riches and everlasting treasure of the kingdom.

And, if thou wouldst draw near and find access to God in prayer, thou must wait to feel the birth pray, and take heed of putting up requests in thy own wisdom, and according to thy own will; for these are the prayers of the false-formed child, or counterfeited birth, and not of the right seed; and the Father knows not, nor regards this voice. This is our religion: to feel that, which God begets in our hearts, preserved alive by God; to be taught by him to know him, to worship, and live to him, in the leadings and by the power of his Spirit: and, in this religion, we have the comforts and appearances of his Spirit; which are past all the disputings and questionings of man's wisdom, yea, and of our own hearts also, being demonstrated and made manifest to our spirits in a higher principle.

I found my heart in great love drawn to write these things to thee; and my soul pursueth them with breathings to the Lord my God, that hereby, or by what other means he shall see good, thou mayst be drawn into true unity and fellowship with the spring of eternal life; and not be deceived from the precious enjoyment of the God of thy life here, or of the salvation of thy soul for ever: The path of life is living; and thy feet must be guided into it, and walk faithfully in it to the end, if thou wilt sit down in God's eternal rest and peace.

I have been long desolate, and a great mourner after my God, and know how to pity and weep over wandering souls; though I cannot but rejoice at this great day of salvation and powerful visitation of God's Spirit, wherein he hath sought out and gathered many into the fold of his pure rest, where he is become their living Shepherd, and daily ministers of his life unto them. And he is seeking out many more: happy are they, that know and return at the Shepherd's voice, when he calleth after them.

I remain thy true, entire, faithful, loving Friend, in the love and good-will of the Lord, wishing to thy sonl as to my own.

I. P.

To ——— ———.

There is a question ariseth in my heart to thee, which is this:

How is the everlasting gospel (wherein Christ is truly made known, and salvation really witnessed in the hearts of those that receive it) preached at this day? How hath the Lord appointed it to be preached, and how is it preached, and how may men come to hear it, that their souls may live? Are not they blessed that hear the joyful sound thereof? Are not they wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, who mistake and miss concerning the sound of it, which it pleaseth the Spirit of the Lord to give forth in this our day? O friend! I beseech thee, consider it, and do not think it strange that I propose it to thee; for he that would find the gospel, must search where it is hid; and it is hid in them that are lost, who go astray from the life and power of it.

It is a wonderful thing, to those whom the Lord hath made truly sensible, to consider how the Truth, the gospel, the life, the power which saves, is one and the same in all ages and generations, and yet, still hid from the wise, prudent, professing eye in every age and generation. O friend! that thou didst thoroughly know that wise and prudent eye

in thyself, from which the Lord hides it, and that eye, which perhaps thou wilt not call prudent, to which the Lord opens it.

Now friend, let me speak a few words to thee, not only from what I have felt in my heart, but have also read in the Scriptures of truth.

The gospel, after the apostasy, is thus to be preached. "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth," &c. Rev. xiv. 7. If thou knowest the Preacher that preached this, if thou hast heard this preached in thine own heart, if thou hast met with that fear there, which God's Spirit teacheth and giveth, if thou hast known the hour of God's judgment, and had the axe laid to the root of the tree; and if thou hast been taught by the Son to worship the Father in Spirit and truth; thou hast, without doubt, met with the gospel, the everlasting gospel; and if God require of thee, and assist thee by his Spirit and power to preach this to others, thou art a preacher of the everlasting gospel, and an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. But I beseech thee, take heed of preaching thine own formings and conceivings upon the letter, as too many do in this day; for that falls short of true preaching the letter. Oh let these things be weighty with thee! that thou mayst learn aright to search and understand the Scriptures, and know how the Father hath revealed the Son in this day, and how to come to him, to receive life from him. For many, through ignorance, mistake in this matter; and so run on in their own wills, wisdom, and comprehension of things, and miss of the drawings of the Father; and thus, come not aright to the Son, but only according as they imagine and apprehend, according to what they have gathered and conceived upon the Scriptures.

Friend, God who caused light to shine in this outward world, hath judged it necessary to cause the light of his Spirit to shine inwardly in the heart; and *this* gives the knowledge of the Scriptures, and the true sense and discerning of inward and spiritual things. Yea, *here* the Son

is known, and his blood felt cleansing; which, without *this*, the Scriptures do not make manifest; but in *this*, the Scriptures are a clear and faithful record of and testimony to them. Oh take heed *how* thou readest, and *how* thou understandest the Scriptures,—in what light, in what spirit! for it is easy erring; and without the presence and guidance of God's Spirit herein, thou canst not walk safely. And truly it is great presumption in any man to read the Scriptures boldly, and without fear and reverence to Him who penned them; or to put any of his own meanings and conceivings upon God's words; which it is hard for him to forbear to do, who reads them in the liberty of his own spirit, out of the light of God's Spirit, which is the limit and yoke of the true readers, and of those who understand the Scriptures.

I. P.

4th of Fourth Month,—

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